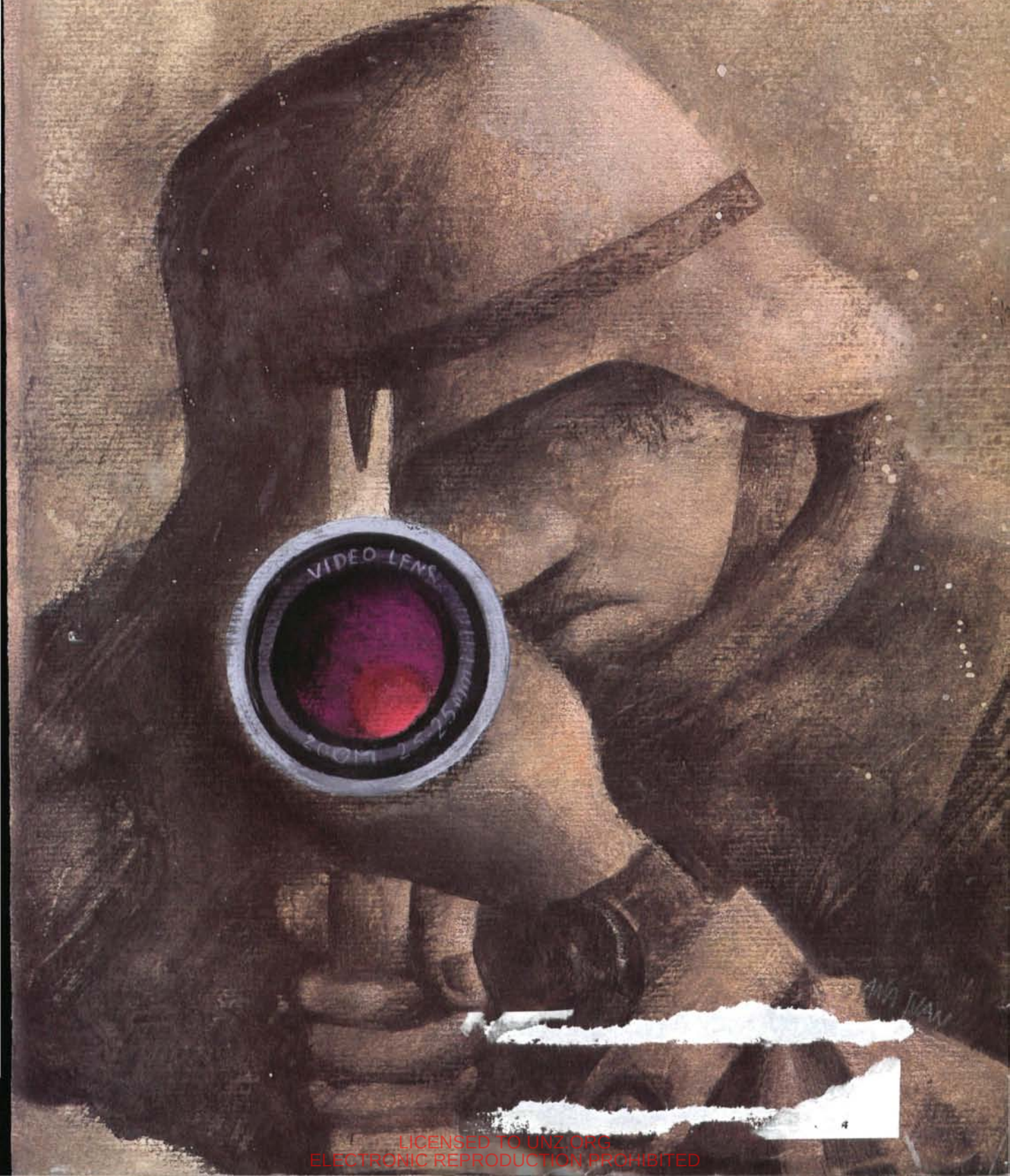


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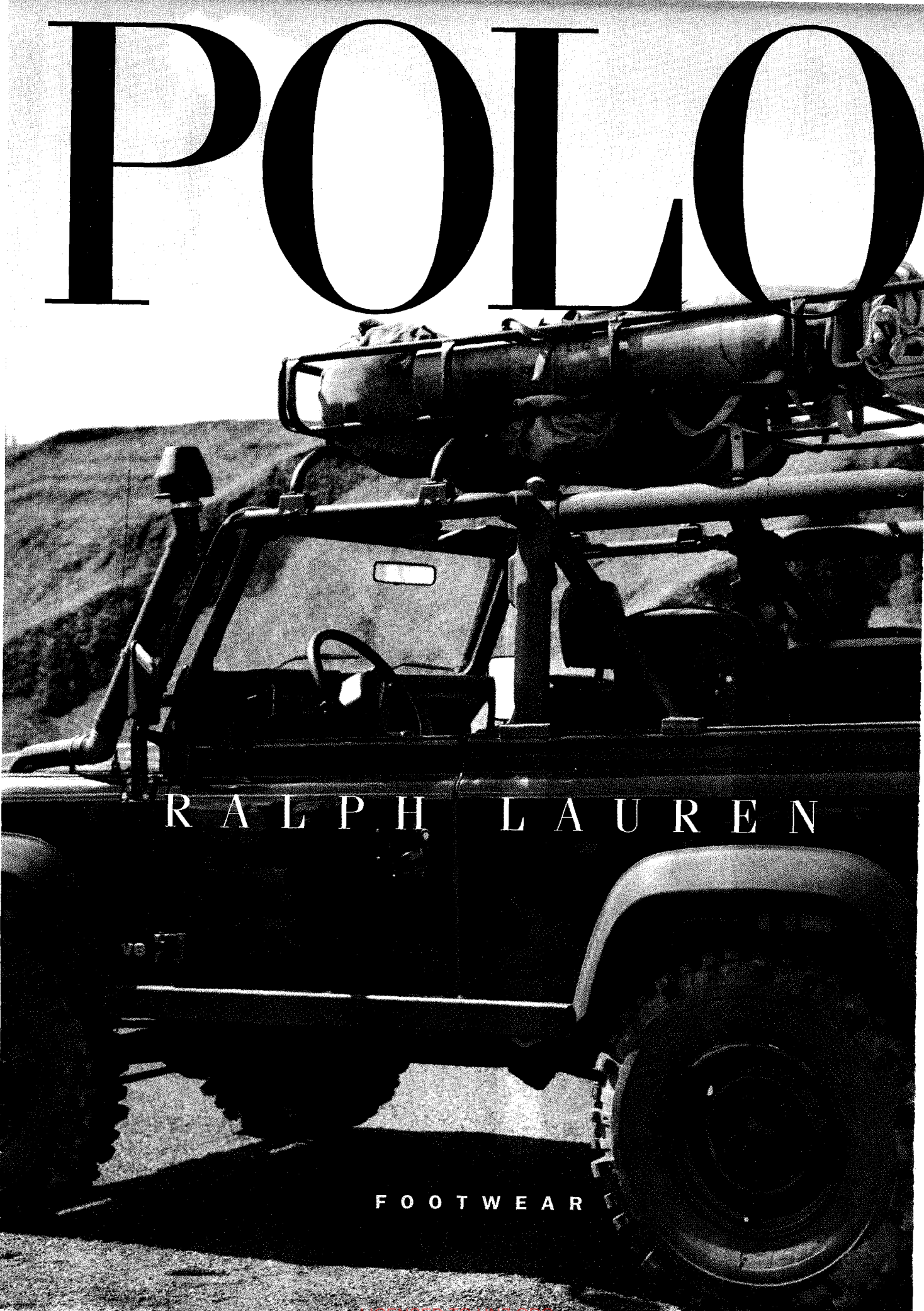
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NEW YORKER

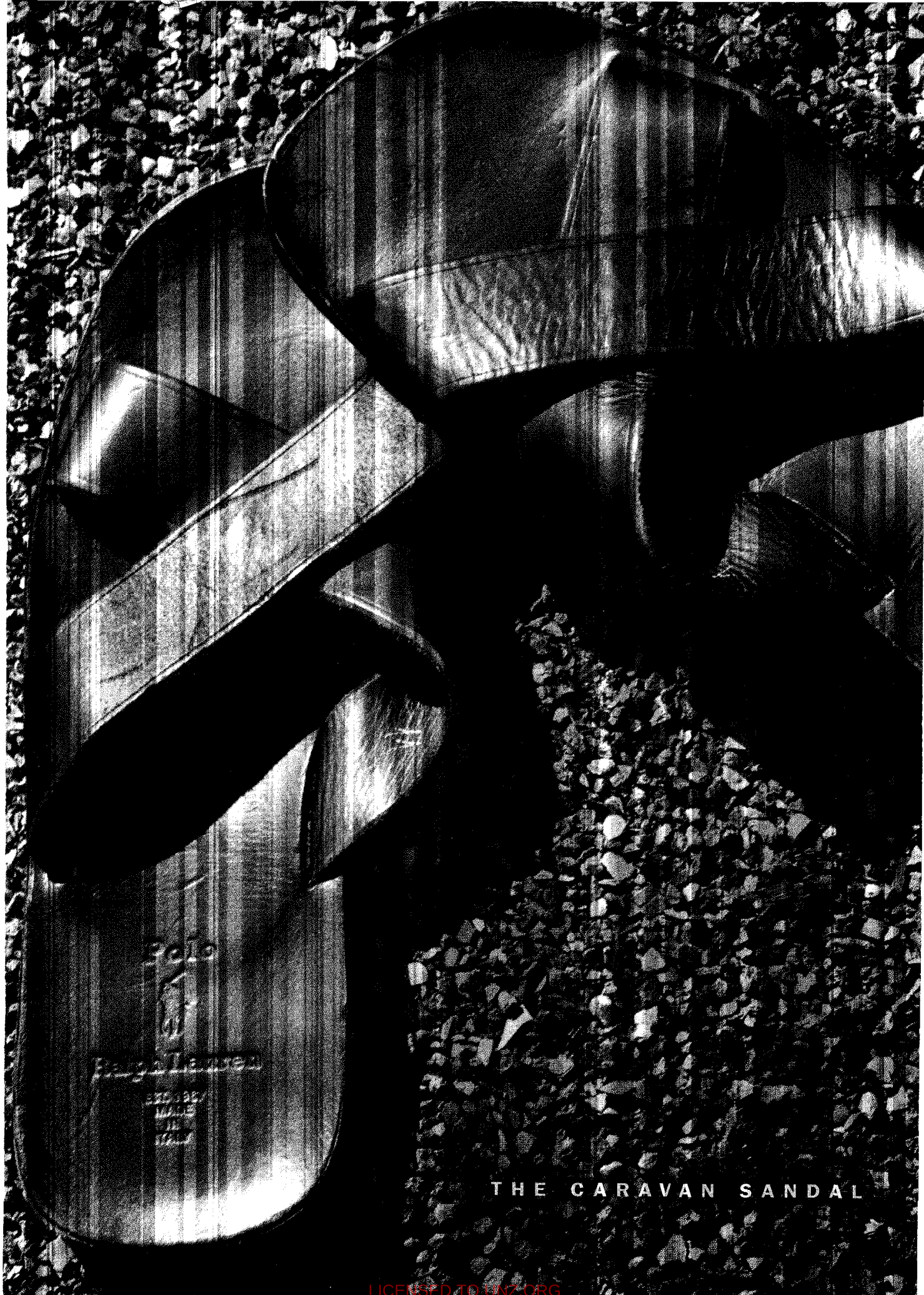


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A black and white photograph of a vintage military jeep, likely a Willys MB, with a machine gun mounted on its roof. The jeep is parked on a desert landscape with hills in the background. The image is used as a background for the Polo advertisement.

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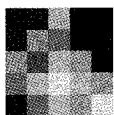
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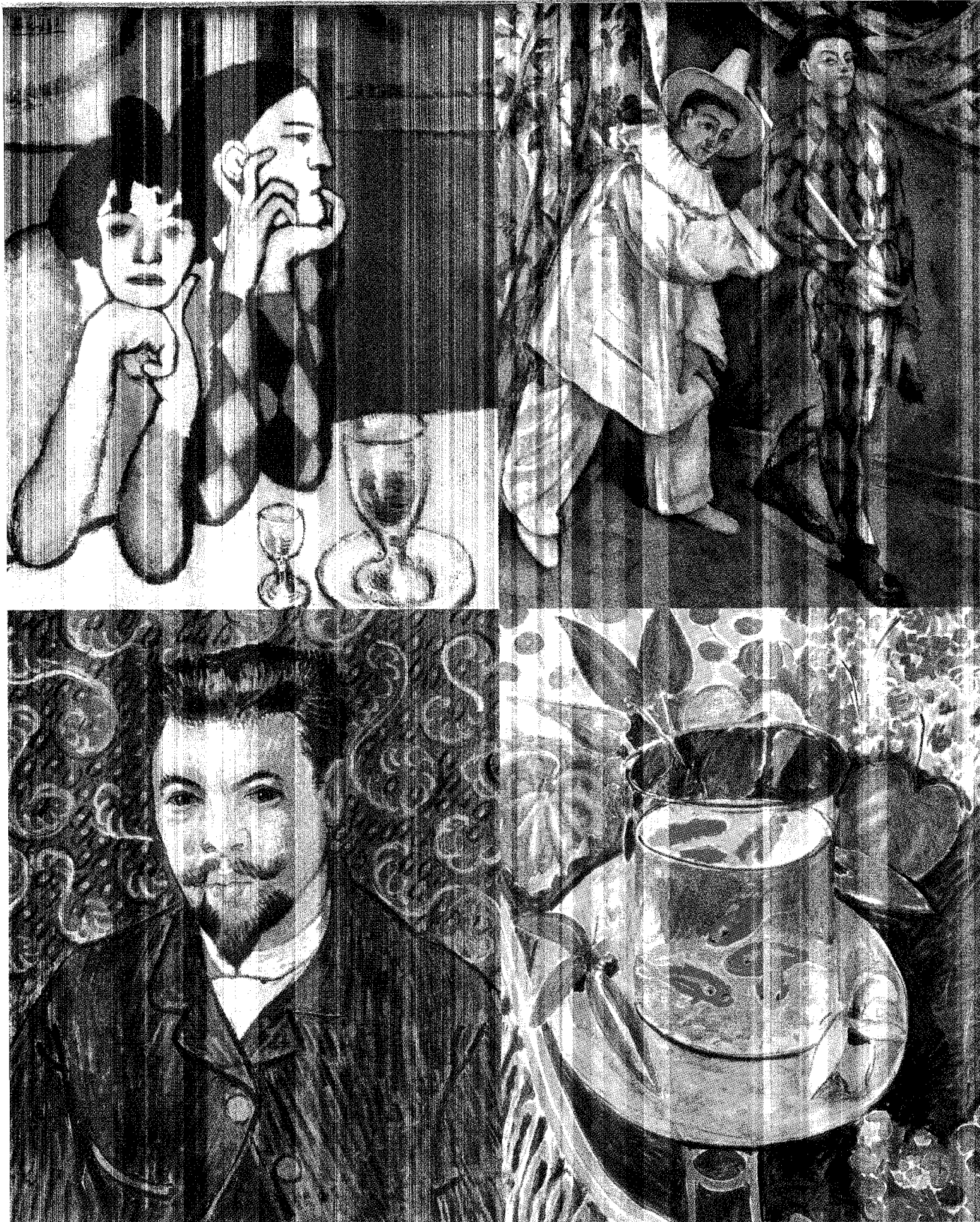
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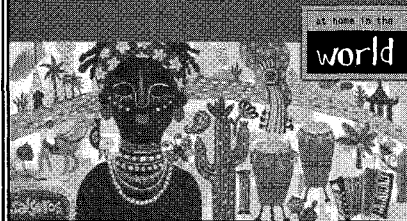
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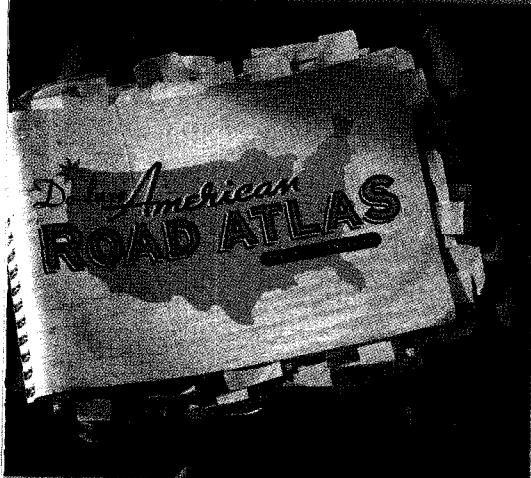
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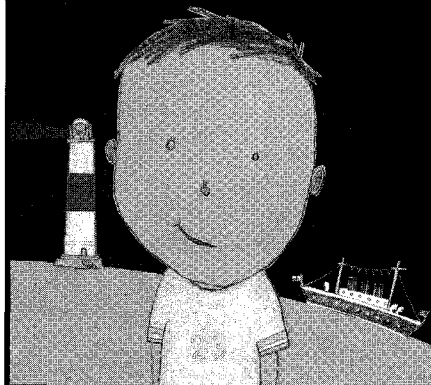
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★ you going to
★ be when you
★ grow up? ★

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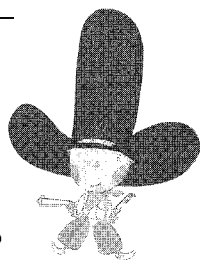
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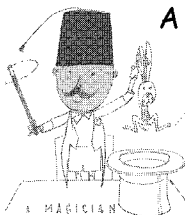
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Dana Goodyear (Poem, p. 38) is an editor on the staff of *The New Yorker*. ♦



"I thought I'd start things off with the 'shock and awe' phase of the operation."

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THE MAIL

DANGEROUSLY CHARMING

Reading Elsa Walsh's Profile of Prince Bandar bin Sultan, Saudi Arabia's Ambassador to the United States, I felt that any nation would be fortunate to have this sophisticated and intelligent man as its representative ("The Prince," March 24th). But foreign policy should be driven by national interests, not by personal relationships. In truth, our country and Saudi Arabia are unnatural allies. American society is based on tolerance, democracy, and respect for individuals. Saudi society is steeped in institutional hatred, corruption, nepotism, and denial of individual freedoms. Women are treated with contempt, and, despite Saudi denials, money from the kingdom has flowed to terrorists. Prince Bandar is not the face of Saudi Arabia but, rather, its charming façade. Were it not for his hunting parties and, more important, his kingdom's oil, he would be persona non grata in Washington. Unfortunately, we have allied ourselves with a shaky dictatorship that rules a hostile population. We should strive to lessen our dependence on foreign oil so that the U. S. can strengthen its national security, while remaining true to its ideals.

*Richard Schlusel
Englewood, N.J.*

EATING AND ART

Judith Thurman's Profile of the performance artist Vanessa Beecroft, who makes her bulimia the center of her work, was depressing ("The Wolf at the Door," March 17th). Beecroft is part of a larger tendency to subordinate art to the idiosyncrasies of the artist's character and thus divorce it from its cultural context. The effort to reinstate an oddly romantic "cult of personality" only cheapens contemporary art. In Beecroft's case, the consequences are more sinister: in a society that, as Thurman notes, is plagued by eating disorders, Beecroft presents the untenable argument that bulimia itself is an art form and an inspiration. The overriding flaw in her work is the glamorization, the unearned aestheticization, of a clinical condition. This not only confuses

the art with the artist; it conflates the fact of disease with pretensions to creativity.

*Marc Caplan
New York City*

A GRAVEYARD IN BAGHDAD

Jon Lee Anderson notes the incongruity of the British cemeteries in Baghdad, with their monuments and inscriptions evocative of empire ("Invasions," March 24th). These cemeteries, like many in France and Belgium, were designed and built by the Imperial War Graves Commission after the First World War. The message Anderson read on the graves, "A Soldier of the Great War—Known Unto God," was written by a commission member and grieving father whose son was killed in Artois—Rudyard Kipling. Kipling's phrase was inscribed on all the thousands of anonymous graves in hundreds of similar cemeteries.

*Arnold Fink
New York City*

HUXLEY'S GOOD SENSE

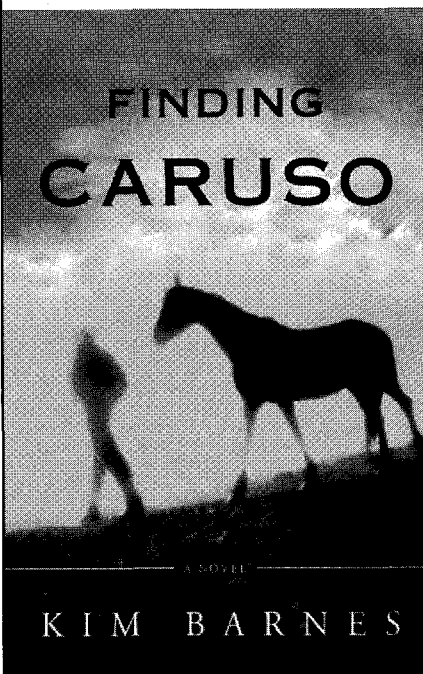
Clive James suggests that Aldous Huxley's limited understanding of math and science allowed him to "still" think (in the nineteen-fifties) that a sufficiently overpopulated world would run out of food (Books, March 17th). In the seventies, many scientists "still" thought this. Technological advances may have helped us to bypass that threat for now, but perhaps only at the cost of hastening the destruction of the planet by other means. Huxley believed in the progress of the human spirit; he was committed to peace and education. However limited his perception, experience, and analysis of sociopolitical issues may have been, he was hardly naïve or behind the times.

*Julie Peterson
Phoenix, Ariz.*

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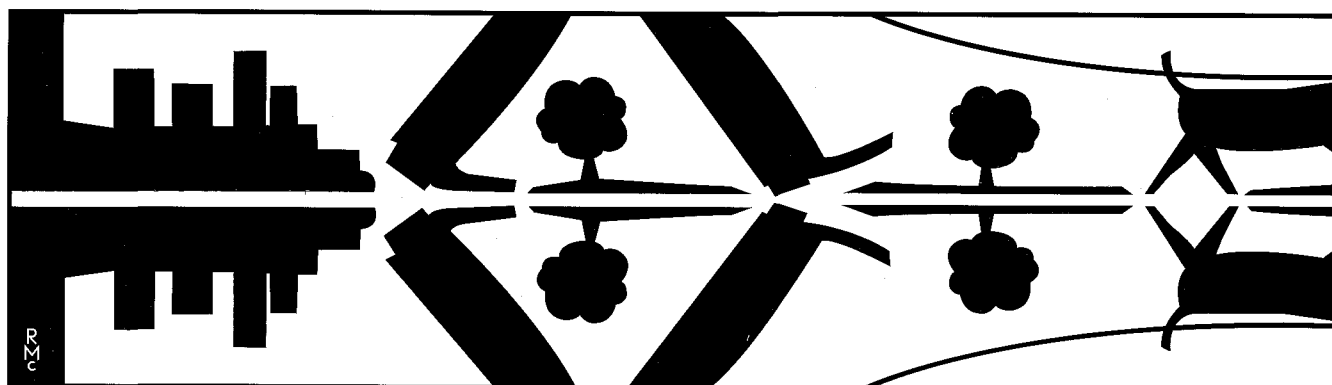
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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN



THE THEATRE OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for timetables and ticket information.

AMERICAN MA(U)L

The playwright Robert O'Hara presents a lacerating new political satire in which the United States, suffering economic collapse and the rule of an idiotic despot, revokes the Thirteenth Amendment and reinstitutes slavery. Previews begin April 12. Opens April 14 at 8. (Culture Project, 45 Bleecker St. 212-352-3101.)

AS YOU LIKE IT

Erica Schmidt brings her popular 2000 Fringe Festival production of Shakespeare's play, first performed in a downtown parking lot, to the Public. Six actors play fourteen parts, with Bryce Dallas Howard as Rosalind. In previews. Opens April 13 at 7. (425 Lafayette St. 212-239-6200.)

DAISY MAYME

The Pearl presents a revival of George Kelly's 1926 comedy about an irrepressible spinster (Robin Leslie Brown) who shakes up the lives of an aging bachelor and the grasping relatives who hope to take possession of his estate. Russell Treyz directs. In previews. Opens April 13 at 7. (80 St. Marks Pl. 212-598-9802.)

DREAM A LITTLE DREAM

A few decades ago in Washington Square Park, all the leaves were brown and the sky was gray, and the Mamas and the Papas were stuck in Greenwich Village, dreaming of California. The original Papa Denny Doherty is still around to sing about it—while he does in a new bio-musical by Randal Myler ("Love, Janis," "Hank Williams: Lost Highway") about the life and times of the group. Doherty performs with an ensemble cast and a six-piece band that plays and sings backup. In previews. (Village, 158 Bleecker St. 212-307-4100.)

GYPSY

In a new production directed by Sam Mendes, Bernadette Peters plays the iconic stage mother Mama Rose, in the musical by Jule Styne, Stephen Sondheim, and Arthur Laurents. With new choreography by Jerry Mitchell and original choreography by Jerome Robbins. In previews. (Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 212-239-6200.)

THE ISLAND

Athol Fugard's apartheid-era play comes to BAM in a production that stars the original 1973 cast members John Kani and Winston Ntshona. April 8-13. (BAM Harvey Theatre, 651 Fulton St. 718-636-4100.)

THE LOOK OF LOVE

The Roundabout Theatre Company presents a musical revue of the songs of Burt Bacharach and Hal David—from "Raindrops Keep Falling on My Head" and "Walk On By" to "What the World

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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13	14	15				

Needs Now." Directed by Scott Ellis and choreographed by Ann Reinking. In previews. (Brooks Atkinson, 256 W. 47th St. 212-307-4100.)

NINE

The Roundabout Theatre Company presents a revival of the Tony Award-winning musical based on Fellini's "8 1/2," performed by an all-star cast that includes Antonio Banderas, Laura Benanti, Jane Krakowski, Mary Stuart Masterson, and Chita Rivera. David Leveaux directs. In previews. Opens April 10 at 7. (Eugene O'Neill, 230 W. 49th St. 212-239-6200.)

TRUMBO

The lively correspondence of the screenwriter and author Dalton Trumbo ("Spartacus," "Roman Holiday," "Johnny Got His Gun")—a member of the "Hollywood Ten" who was imprisoned during the McCarthy era after he refused to answer questions put to him by the House Un-American Activities Committee—has been turned into a play by his son, Christopher. Five different stars alternate in the lead role: Ed Harris, Tim Robbins, Richard Dreyfuss, Alec Baldwin, and Chris Cooper. Directed by Peter Askin. Mondays only, through April 28. (Westside, 407 W. 43rd St. 212-239-6200.)

OPENED RECENTLY

AVENUE Q

This uproarious new musical tells the story of a group of neighbors struggling to make it in New York City. Unlike another musical with a similar theme—"Rent"—the show doesn't deal with life-and-death issues, and many of the neighbors are cloth puppets (the nimble puppeteers are veterans of "Sesame Street"). This could sound like a recipe for juvenilia, but the end product is wicked fun—and definitely for grownups. Subversive, cheerful songs by Robert Lopez and Jeff Marx address drunkenness, promiscuity, and racism with winking matter-of-factness, and the director, Jason Moore, guides the absurdity with zest. With a band led by Gary Adler, puppets designed by Rick Lyon, and book by Jeff Whitty. (Vineyard, 108 E. 15th St. 212-239-6200. Closes April 27.)

THE CRAZY LOCOMOTIVE

The Classical Theatre of Harlem performs Stanislaw Witkiewicz's short avant-garde play, written in 1923, in a production directed by Christopher

McElroen. (H.S.A. Theatre, 645 St. Nicholas Ave., near 141st St. 212-206-1515. Closes April 20.)

A DAY IN THE DEATH OF JOE EGG

Eddie Izzard and Victoria Hamilton star in a revival of Peter Nichols' dark comedy, which has travelled to New York from London's West End, about a couple raising a handicapped child. Directed by Laurence Boswell. (Reviewed in this issue.) (American Airlines Theatre, 227 W. 42nd St. 212-719-1300.)

DON JUAN

The critic Elizabeth Hardwick defined the role of the male seducer as "essentially comic," and in his 1665 play Molière fuelled her argument. By turns self-righteous and bombastic, Don Juan lies to get what he wants—which is attention, in the guise of love. Written in prose rather than in the verse of most of Molière's plays, "Don Juan" emphasizes the slapstick overtones of romantic disputes. This production, directed by Bartlett Sher, is an exercise in style, in which Molière's text is secondary to the world he creates. But that world is not well delineated here, and neither are the characters—except for John Christopher Jones, in an excellent comic turn as Sganarelle, Don Juan's curly-haired valet, who resembles a wise but weary poodle. Byron Jennings, in the title role, is too fey by half and so uninterested in the rest of the cast that it's hard to believe that he could elicit great passions, or even weak ones. With an overly conceptual set by Christopher Akerlind, featuring black clothing that hangs from the rafters. (Lortel, 121 Christopher St. 212-239-6200. Closes April 13.)

FOLEY

In this one-man show, imported from the Corn Exchange in Dublin, George Foley IV (Andrew Bennett) relates the tale of the decline of his family of Irish Protestant gentleman farmers. Michael West's script offers a mix of wistful warmth and wicked humor that spares no one. Bennett, who plays not only himself but everyone else in the family, is dweebily compelling as "the end point of all that evolution and fruitcake." Annie Ryan directs. (Irish Repertory Theatre, 132 W. 22nd St. 212-727-2737. Closes April 19.)

GOLDA'S BALCONY

In William Gibson's one-woman show about Golda Meir—the Russian immigrant from Wisconsin who helped create the state of Israel and eventually became its prime minister—Tovah Feldshuh demonstrates how national and family passions blend in the heart, making dispassionate judgment impossible. Dressed in a bathrobe or in a skirted business suit, smoking all the while, Feldshuh retraces the stateswoman's personal and political battles, taking on her father, her husband, her generals, and Henry Kissinger, and, in one instance, inmates of a Jewish internment camp on Cyprus (she persuaded adults to allow children to emigrate to Israel before them). Feldshuh shows that, even if Meir gave more time to the Jewish state than to her son and daughter, she could not be said to have



Sometimes the toughest food critics
are only happy when their entrée
is served on a bun.



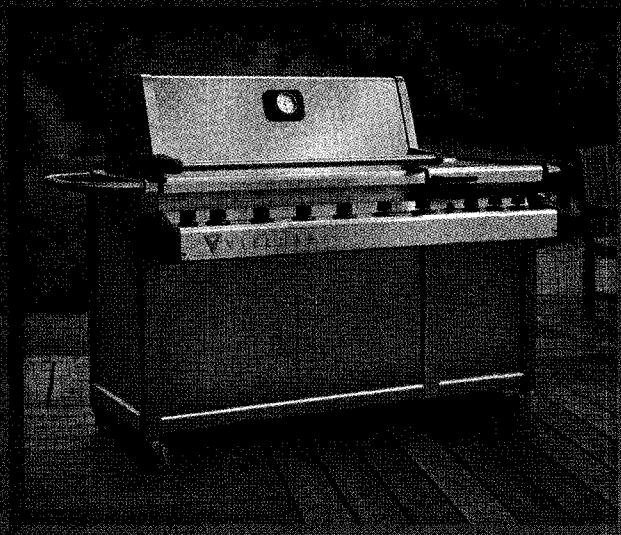
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put the interests of Israelis above the interests of her own children; to her, they were one and the same. Scott Schwartz directs. (Manhattan Ensemble Theatre, 55 Mercer St. 212-239-6200. Closes April 27.)

HANK WILLIAMS: LOST HIGHWAY

In Randal Myler's beguiling musical biography of the hard-drinking, softhearted balladeer, Jason Petty retraces Williams's journey from hardscrabble childhood to honky-tonk renown. The audience keeps him company all the while, tapping their toes even when he's so lonesome he could cry. (Little Shubert, 422 W. 42nd St. 212-239-6200.)

THE JACKIE WILSON STORY

The Black Ensemble Theatre Company's musical about the famed R. & B. singer (who died penniless in 1984 after spending more than eight years in a coma) comes to the Apollo Theatre after a national tour. With Chester Gregory II as Wilson and Melba Moore as his mother. Written and directed by Jackie Taylor. (253 W. 125th St. 212-307-7171. Closes April 27.)

LIFE (X) 3

The monstrous is given an altogether upbeat French bourgeois touch in Yasmina Reza's slick new play, a ninety-minute field day of gleeful malevolence in which three possible scenarios of bad behavior at a failed dinner party play out, to no apparent point. The excellent cast includes Helen Hunt, Brent Spiner, Linda Emond, and John Turturro. Emond, as the princess of the passive-aggressive put-down, and Turturro, in manic mode, make the most noise in this hollow vessel. Directed by Matthew Warchus. (Circle in the Square, 50th St. west of Broadway. 212-239-6200.)

THE NEW YORKERS

This 1930 Cole Porter musical comedy, based on the cartoons of the *New Yorker* cartoonist Peter Arno, has been revived by Musicals Tonight! The artistic director, Mel Miller, has massaged the libretto and expanded the song list, with the permission of the Cole Porter trust. Songs include "Love for Sale," "I Happen to Like New York," and other hits. (14th Street Y, 344 E. 14th St. 212-296-1515. Closes April 20.)

OBSERVE THE SONS

OF ULSTER MARCHING TOWARDS THE SOMME

On a beautiful set, built by Alexander Dodge and lit by Donald Holde, a platoon of Irish Protestant volunteers struggle with their pride, their fear, and their duty on the eve of one of the bloodiest battles of the First World War. The fine and versatile ensemble is well equipped to carry off Frank McGuinness's charged dialogues, and Justin Theroux shines as the lone toff in the bunch, and the lone survivor. Directed by Nicholas Martin. (Mitzi E. Newhouse, Lincoln Center. 212-239-6200. Closes April 13.)

O JERUSALEM

A. R. Gurney's darkly comic drama about the diplomatic failures that preceded 9/11 indicts the American political psyche through close scrutiny of a weak, well-meaning governmental Everyman, Hartwell Clark. Clark (Stephen Rowe) is a self-delighted Yalie oilman married to a Texas heiress. When George W. Bush becomes President, Clark lands a diplomatic post in the Middle East, and in Beirut, he runs into an old lover, Amira (played with glinting fervor by Rita Wolf), a Palestinian whose son is a member of Hamas. The cast delivers Gurney's briskly paced lines with humor and bite, and the play is strong when it is personal and satirical, but Gurney's audacious premise—that the 9/11 attacks were directly tied to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and could have been

prevented—overreaches. Directed by Jim Simpson. (Flea, 41 White St. 212-226-2407. Closes April 19.)

OUR LADY OF 121ST STREET

Stephen Adly Guirgis's play speaks gorgeously to our deracinated times. A group of fractured souls congregate at the Ortiz Funeral Home in Harlem to mourn Sister Rose—a nun who had taught most of them as children—but the wake turns into a vigil when Sister Rose is stolen from her casket. Guirgis's brilliantly drawn characters have been punished by life after their school days and exhausted by their grievances. Burnished to a shine by Philip Seymour Hoffman's deft direction, "Our Lady of 121st Street" is a fever chart of the heart's deceptions. (10/14 & 21/02) (Union Square Theatre, 100 E. 17th St. 212-307-4100.)



Tovah Feldsbuh, as Golda Meir, holds a newspaper bouquet given to her by a Jewish child in "Golda's Balcony," at Manhattan Ensemble Theatre.

THE PLAY WHAT I WROTE

Mike Nichols helped bring this hit play over from London, about one-half of a comedy duo who wants to dump his partner and put on his own play but first needs to cast a major actor to play his co-star. Starring Sean Foley and Hamish McColl as the team, with a secret roster of guest stars. Kenneth Branagh directs. (Lyceum, 149 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200.)

TALKING HEADS

Six solo plays by Alan Bennett come to the Minetta Lane Theatre, in two alternating programs. Michael Engler directs. (Reviewed in this issue.) (18 Minetta Lane, east of Sixth Ave., between W. 3rd and Bleecker Sts. 212-307-4100.)

THWAK

The Umbilical Brothers, a comic duo from Australia, return to New York with their neo-vaudevilian routine, in which they taunt and tease each other, clown with the mike, and act like living cartoons—creating goofy sound effects, which they respond to with rubber-limbed acrobatics. (New Victory, 209 W. 42nd St. 212-239-6200. Closes April 27.)

URBAN COWBOY

Comparisons to the 1980 film starring John Travolta and Debra Winger are inevitable but silly: the movie

was an intimate study of class and sex differences, while this musical is big, brash, eager to please, and none too subtle. The story is the same: small-town Texan comes to Houston, meets girl, falls in love, marries girl, then gets rattled by her need to prove her mettle by riding the mechanical bull at the local beer hall. The savvy director, Lonny Price, keeps the action going and leaves out the explication. What the show lacks in depth the singers and dancers make up for with energy, verve, and well-toned calves and abs, but it's hard to feel anything strongly about the performers except that they are too heavily miked. Matt Cave-nough, as Bud, recalls a young John Raitt, handsome and reliable, while Sally Mayes and Rozz Morehead provide able comic relief. Marcus Chait adds sex appeal as Wes, a spoiler who uses his wily intelligence to

snake his way in between Bud and his girl, Sissy (Jenn Colella). Choreographed by Melinda Roy, with musical direction by Jason Robert Brown. (Broadhurst, 235 W. 44th St. 212-239-6200.)

VINCENT IN BRIXTON

Nicholas Wright's play about the young Vincent Van Gogh's affair with his London landlady shows one complicated collision between genius and domestic order. As the artist, the Dutch actor Jochum ten Haaf gives a startling portrayal of the ugly, messy pursuit of love and the recklessness of self-invention. Even in his quiet moments—when he's listening or waiting for a response—he vibrates with a love of performance that merges with Vincent's love of painting. Under the masterly direction of Richard Eyre, Vincent undresses the soul of his older lover, Mrs. Loyer (Clare Higgins), and Higgins lets us see the striptease. (3/17/03) (Golden, 252 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200.)

THE WOMEN OF LOCKERBIE

In Deborah Brevoort's play, written in the form of a Greek tragedy, a man and woman travel to Lockerbie, Scotland, to visit the site where their only son died in the crash of Pan Am Flight 103. Scott Elliott directs. (St. Clement's, 423 W. 46th St. 212-279-4200.)

ZANNA, DON'T!

All the students at Heartsville High are gay, so calamity ensues when the football quarterback and the female lead in the school play (about heterosexuals in the military) notice that they have feelings for each other. This perky

and adorable musical is so bubble-gum flavored that it could almost cause sugar shock—but the wit of the script cuts the sweetness. Jared Zeus, as the clumsy quarterback, and Anika Larsen, as a white soul-singing lesbian, stand out in the youthful, talented cast. Directed and choreographed by Devanand Janki. (John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 212-239-6200.)

DANCE

BALLET TECH

Eliot Feld's season at the Joyce continues, featuring new and repertory works that stress athleticism and the musculature of the body. (175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. For full schedule, call 212-242-0800. Through April 13.)

"BELLY POLLING"

In the title work of the evening, the seven women of Ivy Baldwin Dance maneuver on their hands, letting their bodies trail behind them. Dressed in business suits, they tug and pull at each other, emitting grunts of effort and gasps of surprise. The dance was inspired by a theatre-improvisation class at Upright

Citizens Brigade and bears the signs of that group's philosophy—arch concepts blended with efficient physical humor. That tactic continues in another piece on the program, "Sympathy for the Audience," in which the fiction writer David Schickler gives voice to typical, skeptical audience perceptions of modern dance, as his sister, Jeanne, performs a post-modern pas de deux with Baldwin. (Joyce SoHo, 155 Mercer St. 212-334-7479. April 11-13 at 8.)

LUCY GUERIN COMPANY

Watching Lucy Guerin's dances is like looking through a microscope at ice crystals or single-cell organisms, except that the subjects are human. In "Melt," Stephanie Lake and Ros Warby move in a projected rectangle of light. They quiver, split apart, hug, and make faces of comfort or rage as the sound gets more urgent and the light gets brighter. "The Ends of Things," which had its debut in Guerin's native Australia, focusses on a man in the last days of his lonely life, played with affecting dejectedness by Trevor Patrick. As he performs daily tasks, three dancers enlarge upon them by echoing his actions, treating him as if he were a puppet and finally crowding him out of his house and taking over his memories themselves. (Dance Theatre Workshop, 219 W. 19th St. 212-924-0077. April 10-12 at 7 and April 13 at 2.)

NICHOLAS LEICHTER AND CLARE BYRNE

Nicholas Leichter and Clare Byrne set the theatre of the absurd to a funky beat, evoking club-kid dance

structured in a snug, burrowlike downstairs room at P.S. 122. (150 First Ave. 212-477-5288. April 9-13 at 7:30. Through April 27.)

A.B.T. STUDIO COMPANY

An evening of new works by American Ballet Theatre Studio Company explores classical themes and the class system. In Daniel Baudendistel's "Heavenly Bodies," set to Dohnányi's "Variations on a Nursery Rhyme," nine dancers give form to the different temperaments and whims of the Muses, on a cloud-spotted set designed by Wendy Mark, in costumes by Kate McDowell. In "Tea and Temptation," ten dancers—half of them servants, half of them aristocrats—send up the British class system with mincing duets and trios, performed to Schubert's Piano Trio in E-Flat, choreographed by Brian Reeder. And in Robert Hill's "Revelry," set to a score by Lowell Liebermann, Danny Tidwell and Laura Hidalgo perform an energetic duet. (Kaye Playhouse, Hunter College. 212-772-4448. April 15-16 at 8.)

"UNDER WHOSE CONTROL"

AMDaT presents a conceptual dance inspired by a remark of the philosopher E. M. Cioran, "To be is to be cornered." Five women literally dance themselves into a corner of a room and up the walls that flank it (both an actual corner and a duplicate, sculptural corner are involved), like Spider-Man in slo-mo. (On View Studio, 338 Berry St., at S. 4th St., Williamsburg, Brooklyn. 718-218-8236. April 12-13 at 2, 3, and 4. Through April 27.)



The Austin, Texas, band Spoon plays two nights at Irving Plaza.

chic with a slightly psychotic edge. In "Baby Doll," a typical solo, when the voice of Mariah Carey cries, rhetorically, that she's going to lose her mind, Leichter's character actually does lose his, crumpling in convulsions, tumbling, and removing his clothes. Other solos and duets are set to music by Lauryn Hill, Roberta Flack, Donny Hathaway, and Aretha Franklin. (Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. 212-864-5400. April 10-11 at 8:30.)

HARKNESS DANCE PROJECT

The 92nd Street Y's spring dance festival concludes with the New York premiere of "Rein, Bellow," by Bill Young & Dancers, a work that mines the magic realism of such novelists as Gabriel García Márquez. With lighting by Rick Murray and costumes by Wendy Winters, the multinational troupe expressively enacts scenes of entrapment, attack, and interconnection—perceived and actual—as they navigate ropes, tables, mirrors, and other props the set throws at them. With a sound score by Philip Hamilton. The group also performs last year's "Bent." (Duke, 229 W. 42nd St. 212-239-6200. April 9-10 and April 12 at 8 and April 13 at 2 and 7.)

"SHADOWMANN, PART II"

In Part II of Sarah Michelson's architecturally allusive Bauhaus dance event, the regimented, intentionally impenetrable dances of Part I (which were performed recently in the cavernous Kitchen space) are decon-

FUNK BROTHERS

More than forty years after they played their first notes as a group, and three decades since they'd been together, the legendary but largely unsung Motor City house band reunited for the making of last year's documentary/concert film "Standing in the Shadows of Motown." The architects of perhaps more hit records than any other band in pop-music history, the Brothers continue their reunion. The guest vocalists here include Joan Osborne and Maxi Priest. (Hammerstein Ballroom, 311 W. 34th St. April 11 at 8.)

THE VINES

Australia's new-rock contenders are, at bottom, devout students of Nirvana who favor zealous displays of mush-mouthed apoplexy. The Vines have risen to the level of their hype, if not exactly above it, thanks to their genuinely bracing guitars and sexy swagger. (Roseland, 239 W. 52nd St. 212-307-7171. April 12 at 6:45.)

ALAN LOMAX TRIBUTE CONCERT

Arlo Guthrie, Pete Seeger, Odetta, the New Lost City Ramblers, Honey Boy Edwards, and Jean Ritchie pay tribute to the seminal musicologist (see also Above and Beyond). (Great Hall, Cooper Union, Third Ave. at 7th St. For more information, call 212-817-8215. April 12 at 8.)

WORLD MUSIC INSTITUTE

David Murray and the Gwo-Ka Masters perform as part of the Institute's ongoing "Africa in the Americas" series. During the past decade, the saxophonist Murray hasn't just tested the waters of exotica; he's taken a full plunge. On last year's album, "Yonn-Dé," he collaborated with a superlative trio of *gwo-ka* vocalists and percussionists. *Gwo-ka* is a precursor of the Caribbean dance music known as *zouk*, and it's a treat to hear it performed outside of its native Guadeloupe. Here Murray joins the vocalist Guy Konkret (who is also on Yonn-Dé) and the drummers Klod Kiavue and Philippe Makaia for what promises to be a lively encounter. (Aaron Davis Hall, City College, Convent Ave. at 134th St. For more information, call 212-545-7536. April 12 at 8.)

PATRICIA KAAS

One of France's top vocalists, making her first appearance in the U.S. in some ten years. (Beacon Theatre. April 13 at 3 and 8.)

CLUBS

Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives; it's advisable to call ahead to confirm engagements.

BOWERY BALLROOM

6 Delancey St. (212-533-2111)—April 10-11: The Dirty Three, an Australian guitar-violin-drum trio, brings its intense and often melancholy music to town. April 13: The Joe Jackson Band. Jackson was once a prototypical angry young man of the New Wave (alongside the likes of Graham Parker and Elvis Costello), but he shunned that role and instead went on to dabble in a myriad of other genres, from swing jazz to neo-classical. He's since returned to the pop fold, and is once again looking sharp with the bassist Graham Maby, the guitarist Gary Sanford, and the drummer Dave Houghton.

IRVING PLAZA

17 Irving Pl., at 15th St. (212-777-6800)—April 9-10: Propelled by throbbing electric piano, skittering tambourine, and the raw, Merseybeat-inspired vocals of their able songwriter Britt Daniel, the Austin upstarts Spoon play sexy, edgy rock and roll. April 11: The Joe Jackson Band (see the Bowery Ballroom).

KNITTING FACTORY

74 Leonard St., between Broadway and Church St. (212-219-3055)—April 9: The troubled and highly regarded singer-songwriter Daniel Johnston stops by with songs from his latest release, "Fear Myself." With Kimya Dawson of the Moldy Peaches. April 10: The fearless songwriter Vic Chesnutt, whose latest album, "Silver Lake," is one of his rootsiest yet.

LUX

256 Grand St., Williamsburg, Brooklyn (718-599-1000)—April 14: The trio Neutral Mute eschews delicate d.j. manipulations for rough-edged guitar-

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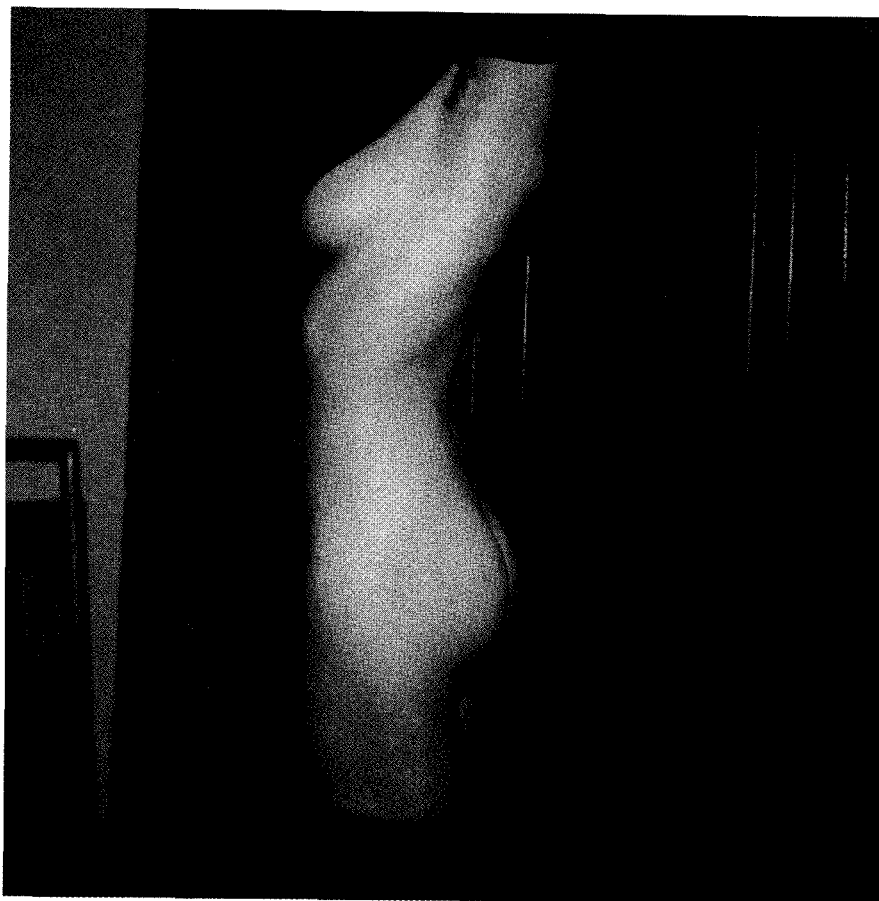
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"Untitled (Torso)," circa 1920, by Artur Nikodem, at Mann (see Photography).

and-drum thrusters. The resulting dance rock is as refreshing as a cool bottle of water in a crowded club. With the epic instrumental flourishes of Maserati and the angular guitars of Disband.

VILLAGE UNDERGROUND

130 W. 3rd St. (212-777-7745)—April 11: One of the less bandied-about names from the initial wave of British punk rock, London's 999 (their name comes from the British equivalent of 911) boasted a more polished sound than that of their safety-pinned peers. As this is their first New York show in twenty years, expect an old-school audience decked out in spiky finery.

WARSAW

261 Driggs Ave., Brooklyn (718-387-0505)—April 10: Top-shelf Americana from Minneapolis's Jayhawks, who will be performing an acoustic show. April 12: The Joe Jackson Band (see the Bowery Ballroom).

JAZZ AND STANDARDS

BLUE NOTE

131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (212-475-8592)—Through April 13: The conga giant Ray Barretto pays tribute to the prodigious drummer and bandleader Art Blakey. Barretto's hard-bopping sextet heats up choice Jazz Messenger-era Wayne Shorter and Lee Morgan tunes with Latin spice. Sharing the bill is the Benny Golson quartet. The tenor saxophonist Golson, with his brawny tone, full-throttle energy, and impeccable credentials, is a genuine hard-bop hero.

CARLYLE HOTEL

Madison Ave. at 76th St. (212-744-1600)—The Café Carlyle, a snug, windowless enclave in the doorman district, features discreet waiters, wraparound murals, and through April 12, James Naughton. While devoted fans swoon at Naughton's foggy utterances, all others may find the Broadway veteran's vocalizing an acquired taste. What's undeniable, though, is his rapport with an audience and his comfort on

a small stage. On Mondays the café is home to Woody Allen and the Eddie Davis New Orleans Jazz Band. ♦ Across the hall, in Bemelmans Bar, Loston Harris is in attendance.

IRIDIUM

1650 Broadway, at 51st St. (212-582-2121)—Through April 13: Kenny Garret's latest recording, "Standard of Language," displays all of the skill and vigor expected from this former Miles Davis sideman, without revealing anything new. Onstage, Garret will have another chance to fully express his considerable talents. Mondays belong to the electric-guitar innovator Les Paul.

JAZZ STANDARD

116 E. 27th St. (212-576-2232)—Through April 13: The drummer Billy Drummond and bassist Ray Drummond aren't related, but the pianist Renee Rosnes is Billy's wife—got it? No matter. What's important is that they play like family. For this engagement, the sterling saxophonists Gary Bartz and Steve Wilson fortify the front line. Mondays in April: The Millennial Territory Orchestra, Steve Bernstein's eminently likable, twenty-first-century swing ensemble. Dining.

JOE'S PUB

425 Lafayette St. (212-539-8777)—April 12: A present-day ironist with a prewar (First World War, that is) heart, the guitarist, vocalist, and composer Matt Munisteri leads the delightful, lightly swinging chamber jazz quintet Brock Mumford.

KNITTING FACTORY

74 Leonard St., between Broadway and Church St. (212-219-3055)—April 10-11: A duo featuring the pianist Bill Charlap and the tenor saxophonist Harry Allen calls to mind the sublime partnership of Kenny Barron and Stan Getz. No one deserves that kind of pressure, but these two lyrically minded players are surely up to the test.

TONIC

107 Norfolk St. (212-358-7503)—Have guitar, will confound expectations. For Britain's Derek Bailey, sound itself is the stuff of music. He's as tough-minded an improviser as they come, but that hasn't stopped a slew of co-conspirators from joining in the

sonic fray over the years. Bailey's brave guests include the technologically proficient drummer Ikue Mori, on April 10, the Brazilian percussionist Cyro Baptista, on April 11, and the electronic improvisational duo known as the Shaking Ray Levis, on April 12.

VILLAGE VANGUARD

178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (212-255-4037)—Through April 13: After decades of providing the muscle for others, the splendid bassist Buster Williams has been stepping out on his own; his quartet here features the pianist George Colligan and the drummer Lenny White. The Vanguard Jazz Orchestra holds sway on Mondays.

ART

MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

METROPOLITAN MUSEUM

Fifth Ave. at 82nd St. (212-879-5500)—"Manet/Velázquez: The French Taste for Spanish Painting," a ravishing and keenly illuminating show, marshalls great paintings to demonstrate a miracle in art history: the rebirth of Spanish Baroque painting in nineteenth-century Paris, brought about by Édouard Manet. It was as electrifying a development in its way as the Renaissance rediscovery of antiquity. Manet's appropriation of Velázquez's crystalline, rhetorical realism transformed French painting and, beyond that, set an example of stylistic resourcefulness that has informed artistic innovation ever since. At one end of its two-century leap, the show is augmented with works by Zurbarán, Murillo, and other Spaniards, and, at the other, by relevant figures from Delacroix to Sargent. But the summit meeting of Velázquez and Manet dominates. Through June 8. ♦ A mid-career retrospective of the photographs and video portraits of the German photographer Thomas Struth. Through May 18. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:30, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 9.)

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART (MOMA QNS)

33rd St. at Queens Blvd., Long Island City (212-708-9400)—Even what's wrong with "Matisse Picasso," the magnificent show that deploys a hundred and thirty-three works by the twin godheads of modern painting, is revelatory. It is a double-barrelled blast of an exhibition with a popgun thesis: that Picasso and Matisse goaded and influenced each other. So do most artistic contemporaries. In any case, trying to absorb fine curatorial points of comparison between such stunners as Picasso's "Les Femmes d'Alger" and Matisse's "Bathers with a Turtle" is like trying to check the oil in a speeding truck. The show's payoff comes from the jagged, overwhelming sense it gives of how different the two were as men and artists—as antithetical, and evenly matched, as Ali and Frazier. Through May 19. (Open Thursdays, Sundays, and Mondays, 10 to 5, and Fridays and Saturdays, 10 to 9.)

GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM

Fifth Ave. at 89th St. (212-423-3500)—"Matthew Barney: The Cremaster Cycle" attempts an apotheosis of the artist. Frank Lloyd Wright's bobbins turns cornucopia, brimming with the fruits of Barney's epic nine-year "Cremaster" project: all five spectacular, recondite films projected amid outlandish objects, photographs, drawings, decorative elements such as flags and artificial turf, and, along the ramp, runnels of congealed Vaseline. It's oddly, numbingly earnest. There's nothing fake about Barney. Would that there were. A touch of the charlatan (or of humor, God forbid) would prove that he cares what other people think. As it is, the show is seamlessly hermetic: a solipsist's houseparty. But to miss this landmark event is unthinkable. If not a major artist, he is certainly a major case. Through June 11. (Open Saturdays through Wednesdays, 10 to 5:45, and Fridays, 10 to 8.)

WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART

Madison Ave. at 75th St. (212-570-3676)—"Scanning: The Aberrant Architectures of Diller + Scofidio," a retrospective featuring the designs of the husband-and-wife team. Through May 25. (Open Tuesdays through Thursdays, and weekends, 11 to 6; Fridays, 1 to 9.)

BROOKLYN MUSEUM OF ART

Eastern Parkway (718-638-5000)—"The Last Expression: Art and Auschwitz," a show of drawings

and paintings done in the concentration camps and ghettos of Europe during the Second World War, opens with portraits, and it could close there. Accomplished drawings by members of the Polish underground, rougher pencil sketches that were mailed out as confirmation that loved ones were still alive, and softly drawn likenesses of women prisoners—their hair elaborately curled—bring viewers face to face with ghosts. Other selections include young Thomas Geve's tiny maps of the barracks, drawn to describe his location to his father, and escapist floral watercolors that those who didn't want to remember their environment painted inside the heavy margins of the camp's preprinted stationery. Through June 15. (Open Wednesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5; weekends, 11 to 6.)

GALLERIES-UPDOWN

Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays, from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6.

GLENN KAINO

A two-pronged steel propeller spins at forty revolutions per minute; attached to one blade is a miniature ranch-style house, complete with a tiny swimming pool whose real water sloshes in place, held by centrifugal force. Attached to the other blade is a big

POP NOTES



STRIPES AND STARS

The White Stripes have been the subject of so much hype that it's easy to forget that they are also a working band, and one of the country's best. "Elephant" (V2) finds the Detroit duo returning with a leviathan slab of rock and roll. Powered by Jack White's guitar and vocals and Meg White's atavistic drumming, "Elephant" takes the central concerns of the blues (the elusiveness of romantic love, primarily) and treats them with roughness rather than reverence. The White Stripes have such a well-defined body of work that some of the new songs seem to speak directly to older material: for example, "There's No Home for You Here" is built on the same frame as "Dead Leaves and the Dirty Ground," and "Hypnotize" updates the frenetic garage rock of "Fell in Love with a Girl." But the palette is larger. "I Want to Be the Boy to Warm Your Mother's Heart" could be a Rod Stewart outtake; there's a grand, melodramatic cover of the Bacharach/David ballad "I Just Don't Know What to Do with Myself"; and the album closes with "It's True That We Love One Another," a hilariously offhanded colloquy between Jack, Meg, and the British singer Holly Golightly. On the strength of "Elephant," it's not too much of an overstatement to call the White Stripes a pocket Led Zeppelin: two musicians kicking up enough racket for four, and then some.

Lucinda Williams has made a career out of turning sorrow into beauty with spectacular results. But her new album, "World Without Tears" (Lost Highway), doesn't spend enough time on the beauty. Williams' voice is still magnificent, the very definition of country-rock, but what she does with it here is, too often, a shame. The songs, relentlessly dour, leave her vocals sounding mannered rather than passionate. While "Fruits of My Labor" starts things off on a soulful note, "Righteously" descends into pro-forma hominess, and the half-spoken "American Dream" piles on so many different kinds of disenfranchisement and despair (drug addiction, black lung, poverty, the legacy of Vietnam) that it will have listeners reaching for the chorus of an earlier song: "You took my joy / I want it back."

—Ben Greenman

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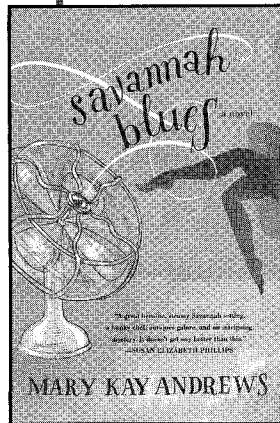
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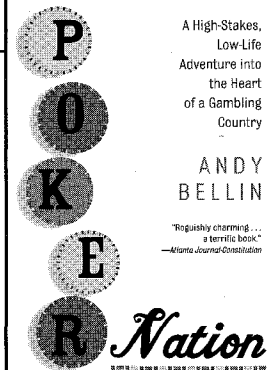
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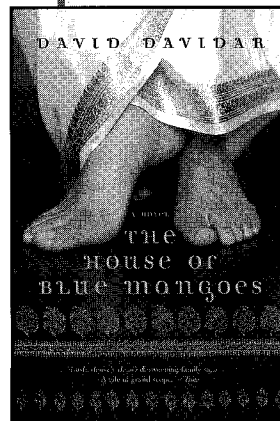


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vivid

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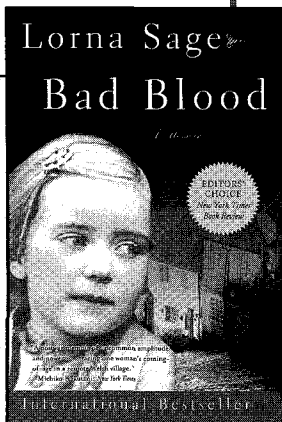
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rock. Nearby, an oversized sandcastle fills a scaled-up version of one of those desktop Zen rock gardens. The implied warning against complacency may be commonplace, but Kaino's games of size and stasis have a quirky appeal. Through April 27. (The Project, 427 W. 126th St. 212-662-8610.)

JOHN MOORE

In these latest landscape paintings, Moore moves indoors, framing his typically complex urban views (of Paris, Barcelona, Philadelphia, and New York) against the grid of sash and sill. Your eye leaps, in a suavely intricate painting called "Tie," from heavy mullions to slender flights of utility wires bisected by a construction crane, and then across the East River, where five pairs of smokestacks mark off a little visual fusillade of eighth notes. The new paintings clarify what Moore has always been after—a kind of understated formality, a realism tuned by artifice. Through April 26. (Hirschl & Adler Modern, 21 E. 70th St. 212-535-8810.)

Short List

JULIE HEFFERNAN

Littlejohn, 41 E. 57th St. 212-980-2323. Through April 19.

eager to make good-looking paintings? Or are we apt to underestimate beauty when it comes in this kind of assured, reductive packaging? Through April 12. (Elizabeth Harris, 529 W. 20th St. 212-463-9666.)

SHARON LOCKHART

The Los Angeles artist shows large-scale conceptual photography and film whose subject may be cordial relations between living and inanimate things. Two lifelike sculptures by Duane Hanson are pictured: a little girl doing a jigsaw puzzle and three workmen taking a break amid scaffolds and tools. In Lockhart's photos, a real woman pretends to aid the girl, and two museum preparators are seen installing the workmen piece. Nineteen shots track the elegant decay of a Japanese Nō-no ikebana. Elsewhere, in a slow, beautiful film, a Japanese farming couple gravely pile hay in a field, then briskly spread it with rakes. Through April 26. (Gladstone, 515 W. 24th St. 212-206-9300.)

LARRY MANTELLO

These environmental assemblages present a cornucopia of emptiness: all-American (made in China, mostly) packages of toys, souvenirs, candy, and whatnot. The word "kitsch" doesn't fit, because there's no pretense to art in the objects. Tweety Bird and Mickey Mouse dolls, Michael Jordan and Uncle Sam posters, Ben & Jerry's containers, and plastic

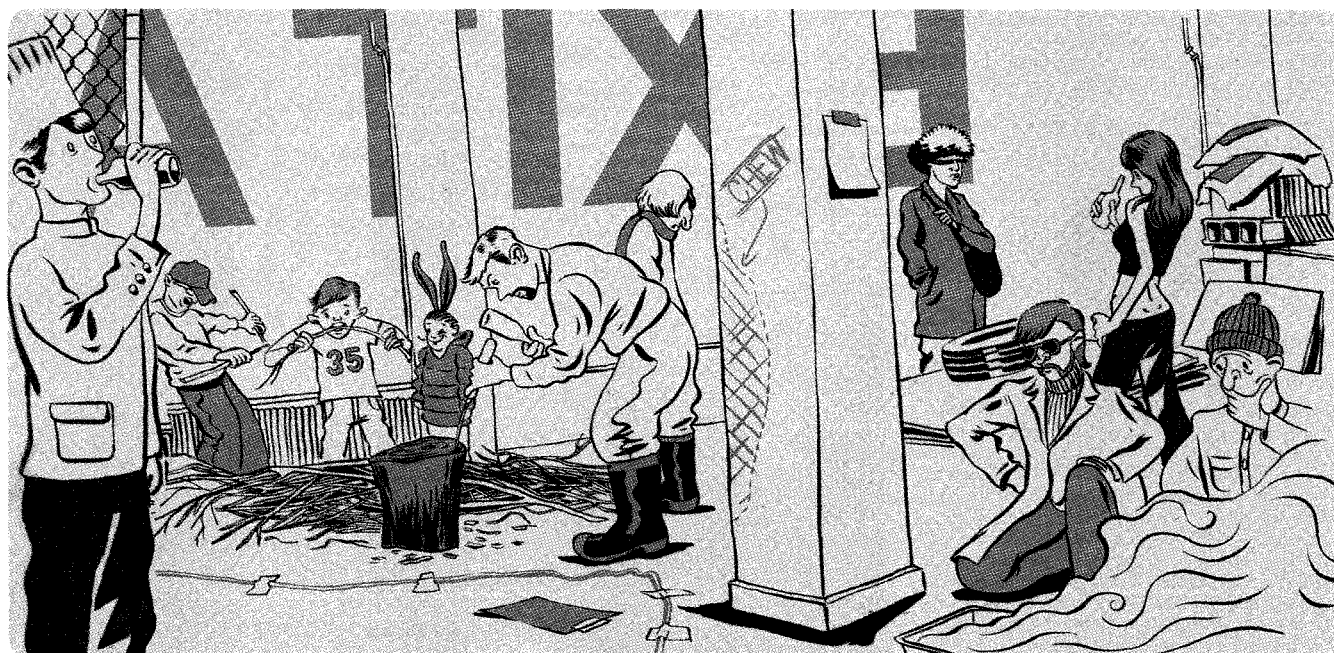
and spatially entrancing, the installation is womb, tent, grotto, and amusement park. Through April 19. (Bonakdar, 521 W. 21st St. 212-414-4144.)

ALEXIS ROCKMAN

With this return to hyperrealistic images of the natural world, Rockman patrols the border between Pop art and nineteenth-century naturalism. Aside from the forays into hypothetical genetic engineering (a recent mural showed a pig with organs ready to harvest and a space-saving rectangular cow with a super-udder), he concentrates on volcanoscapes, meticulously depicting the elemental organisms, insects, birds, fish, and mammals that live near the lava. In one painting, "Cataclysm," a motley crew of bugs are blown sky high by the violence of an eruption, and in another, "Fracture Zone," bizarre, light-bulbed fish swim placidly as a vent on the ocean floor opens below them. A series of elegant drawings—done in mud, "pulverized rotting wood," and wallaby fur—of Tasmanian flora and fauna and three volcanic watercolors complement the paintings, and turn down the heat. Through April 19. (Gorney, Bravin, and Lee, 534 W. 26th St. 212-352-8372.)

"THE RECONSTRUCTION"

The venerable independent space Exit Art has moved from SoHo to Hell's Kitchen and inaugurated its vast



Exit Art inaugurates its new space with a show of installations whose construction continues through the run.

GALLERIES—CHELSEA

ZOE LEONARD

There's a peculiar sobriety in Zoe Leonard's photographs. She works in series—new groups present leafless yet fruiting orchard trees, bricked-in and boarded-up windows, and the patterns made by gum on the sidewalk. The mix of dourness and delicacy, which suggests riches within the barren, is psychologically appealing. But there's a tiredness to this studied understatement, brought home by the all-too-easy assemblage sculpture of a bunch of objet-trouv   battered suitcases, as if to suggest that Leonard's discriminating eye couldn't find enough to look at in the world. Through April 19. (Paula Cooper, 521 W. 21st St. 212-255-1105.)

PAT LIPSKY

In Lipsky's new syncopated stripe paintings, alternating patterns mesh along the midline of each canvas, creating simple, staggered, often breathtaking effects. "Blue Border," with its gearlike arrangement of red columns, could hold up against the best of Brice Marden—or of the Gee's Bend quilters. A smaller canvas called "That's That" is equally fine. Occasionally, Lipsky's appetite for overnuanced color nudges her toward pure design. Is she a little too

jack-o'-lanterns aren't kitsch; they're decorated disposables, which is something else. Abundant American flags and a taped James M. Cohan song suggest mock patriotism, but an aura of stoned affection prevails. Bland pleasures on a grand scale. Through May 3. (Henry Urbach Architecture, 526 W. 26th St. 212-627-0974.)

JOSIAH MCELHENY

McElheny equates mirrored surfaces with a heavy dose of unstable style in this elaborate show of glass works. On every side are plinths, vitrines, and wall cases filled with delicate vessels in blown glass. Every inch of them shines with a blinding silver mirroring—vases and faces replicate to infinity as you peep in. References to Buckminster Fuller and Renaissance geometries underpin the project, but really it's all about the luscious surface. Through April 19. (Sikkema, 530 W. 22nd St. 212-929-2262.)

ERNESTO NETO

Neto constructs a gorgeously eccentric sanctuary in the midst of Chelsea's cold boutiques and loud garages. Giant blocks of white polyurethane foam are carved into monumental archways, tunnels, and caves into which the shoeless viewer (in one area, in a full-body cotton suit supplied by the gallery) is invited to slide or crawl. Within, a cushioned hush pervades; the fluted edges and varying thicknesses of the foam do lovely things with light. Ingeniously simple

new quarters with an appealingly topical show. The curators chose thirty-four projects out of four hundred proposals for new installations; nearly all are by unknowns. On opening night, the artists arrived with their power tools, Sheetrock, and pickup trucks. From now until the show's second opening (and beyond), you can wander through the space seven days a week, watching whimsical or functional structures take shape: candy factory, refugee tent, sweatshop, weather station, incubator, etc. Through May 4. (Exit Art, 475 Tenth Ave., at 36th St. 212-966-7745.)

Short List

ELIZABETH MURRAY

Pace Wildenstein, 534 W. 25th St. 212-421-3292. Through April 19.

GALLERIES—DOWNTOWN

ALEXANDER VINOGRADOV AND VLADIMIR DOUBOSSARSKY

For the past couple of years, the amiable Russian duo have been working on an "endless painting" of flowers, animals, stretch limousines, and smiling celebrities. The thirty-eight-panel section on view here

ZOHAR LAZAR

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is titled "Our Best World," and it wraps around the gallery, taking the viewer on a seamless journey from Moscow to Manhattan, with glimpses of Madonna, Kate Moss, Elvis, and the artists themselves along the way. As paintings, the panels are substandard fare—you can see better murals in most burrito joints. What's of interest is their attitude, a sporty Koonsian cheer. Through April 19. (Deitch Projects, 76 Grand St. 212-343-7300.)

Short List

ANA PATRICIA PALACIOS

Latin Collector, 153 Hudson St. 212-334-7813. Through April 12.

GALLERIES-BROOKLYN

JORDON SCHRANZ / AUSTIN THOMAS

"Arrivals and Departures," Schranz's first New York solo show, is full of black-and-white oils of airports and planes, lush with paint and dotted with color—indisputably stark looks at a source of national anxiety. Any doubt that he's thinking about disaster is dispelled by the fully suited Challenger astronauts, sun glinting from their visors. Outside, Austin Thomas's latest "perches," in this case whimsical, minimalist wooden lawn furniture, offer a place in the sun, and a setting for a tea party every Sunday afternoon through Memorial Day. Schranz through April 14; Thomas through May 26. (Black and White, 483 Driggs Ave. 718-599-8775.)

PHOTOGRAPHY

LISA KERESZI

The saturated colors and fun-house compositions of these photographs present a demimonde of motel bathrooms, parking structures, neon signs, and strip-club booths: not exactly uncharted territory for documentarists or fabulists. But Kereszi's contribution has less to do with social commentary than with the way planes, patterns, shadow, and illumination fit together. The tinselly drama of her scenes suggests the current vogue for theatrically arranged and digitally manipulated images, but Kereszi refuses even to crop her pictures: She's reporting live from a latter-day Damon Runyon-land. Through April 14. (Pierogi, 177 N. 9th St. 718-599-2144.)

WILLIAM KLEIN

Klein's pictures of Tokyo were all taken in 1961, during modern Japan's period of adolescence between the war and the economic boom. Unlike, say, Shoji Ueda, whose often unsettling portraits of nineteen-sixties Japan suggest shadowy confusion, Klein focusses on the city's residents who bristle with industry, purpose, and confidence. In "Monkey Bars," kids clamber energetically over an enormous jungle gym, and the picture's lone adult, a beleaguered snack vender, morosely tends his wares in the foreground. Easy insouciance also informs "Bowing Ceremony," in which a dozen women, some in Western dress and some in kimonos, greet one another in a manicured park, laughing and chatting. Klein's photographs capture the personalities and public lives of the cities he documents, and his Tokyo certainly doesn't seem to be a city in the midst of an identity crisis; one suspects its residents haven't got the time for one. Through May 3. (Gallery 292, at 120 Wooster St. 212-431-0292.)

CHEMA MADDOZ

This Spaniard shows a strain of formal Surrealism not often seen these days. Maddoz creates unlikely constructions that are surprisingly funny. A hard-boiled egg shares a crack with its eggcup; a melting ice cube is neatly tied with a bow; and a burned-out match seems to be on fire, but it's the perfectly formed knots in the wooden board on which it rests that create the effect. Maddoz's work avoids preciousness through its spare elegance and beautifully printed oddities. Through April 19. (Milo, 552 W. 24th St. 212-414-0370.)

MIGUEL RIO BRANCO

Images of intricately carved doorways, bloodied knives on cobblestone streets, and sweaty embraces

are projected in rapid succession onto a simple white sheet that bisects the main room of the Aperture Foundation's gallery. Eerie, clanging music and a jittery projection of pornographic stills on a side wall complete the installation and create a vaguely menacing evocation of the Brazilian's Latin-American-gothic aesthetic. There is also a set of large prints—a lion set to jump through a flaming hoop, two boxers exercising, a slain bull's severed horn—that are so decadently colored they'll make you marvel that they are photographs at all. Through May 8. (Burden, 20 E. 23rd St. 212-505-5555.)

"ART PHOTOGRAPHY IN JAPAN"

A selection of photography from the nineteen-twenties and thirties in which all things Western—especially art and design—were the rage. Accordingly, many of the pictures here—watery gray landscapes and quiet streets, most taken by anonymous artists—feel somewhat unspecific and unfamiliar, quite different from the sort of vivid, harsh street scenes for which Japanese photographers were later renowned. There are some remarkable images on display here, the best of which, a 1925 shot of a theatre marquee announcing the arrival of Charlie Chaplin's "City Lights," is a beautiful play of shadows and light against a deep, grainy night. Through May 3. (Greenberg, 120 Wooster St. 212-334-0010.)

"FLESH TONES"

A mixture of prurience and reverence crowds the walls in this survey of the nude in photographic history. From an early Steichen photogravure, George Platt Lynes's beefcake, Irving Penn's voluptuous women, and Harry Callahan's Eleanor to Richard Avedon's Nureyev, Sally Mann's kids, and Nan Goldin's friends, unclothed bodies allegorize, transgress, or simply play around. Emmet Gowin's hauntingly beautiful picture of his wife, nude and folded into a window frame, strikes all these chords at once. John O'Reilly's montages of soldiers, saints, and erections are both precious and shocking. A striking, multiply exposed image by Michael Spano gets to the point of all this nakedness by showing two people engaged in various moments in the confusing mess of sex. Through April 19. (Mann, 210 Eleventh Ave. 212-989-7600.)

Short List

GAIL ALBERT-HALABAN

Meyerowitz, 120 Eleventh Ave. 212-414-2770. Through April 12.

LYNN DAVIS

Houk, 745 Fifth Ave. 212-750-7070. Through May 3.

RALPH EUGENE MEATYARD

Pace/MacGill, 534 W. 25th St. 212-929-7000. Through April 19.

AUCTIONS AND ANTIQUES

SOTHEBY'S

April 9 at 10:15 A.M. and 2: "Arcade" jewelry, a selection of pieces at moderate prices. ♦ April 10 at 10:15 A.M. and 2: "Magnificent Jewels." An Art Deco diamond-decorated "mystery clock" (from 1924) by Cartier and a fancy intense blue diamond of just over four carats (expected to bring more than half a million dollars) are highlights of the sale. (York Ave. at 72nd St. 212-606-7000.)

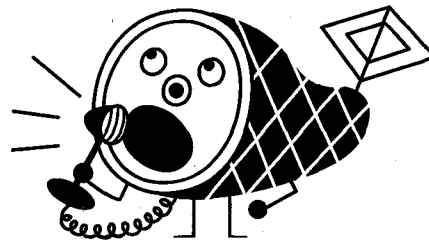
CHRISTIE'S

April 9 at 10 A.M.: English furniture, including a George II needlework-covered mahogany armchair from the collection of Frank Crozer Knowles and a circular extending dining table by Johnstone and Jeanes. ♦ April 11 at 10 A.M. and 2: Russian works of art. A Fabergé Easter egg of pale-green bowenite given by Tsar Alexander III to his wife, the Empress Maria Feodorovna, in 1892—expected to bring between two and three million dollars—is the highlight of the sale. ♦ April 14 at 2 and April 15 at 10 A.M.: Jewelry, including a rectangular-cut diamond ring of nearly six carats once owned by Nela Rubinstein (wife of the pianist Arthur Rubinstein) and an emerald-and-diamond necklace by Harry Winston, from the estate of Eleanor Searle Whitney McCollum. ♦ April 15 at 2: The climax of the house's jew-

BOOK CURRENTS

With Some Frequency

"CQ, CQ, CQ, this is W2OJW, calling CQ. Whiskey Two Oscar Juliet Whiskey in Hackensack, New Jersey, standing by for a call." For seventy-four years, before his "key went silent," in 2001, this was the nightly appeal of Jerry Powell, an aeronautical engineer, amateur trombonist, and avid ham-radio operator. Powell's devotion to vacuum tubes, multiband yagis, parallel RLC cir-



cuits, and midnight conversations with fellow-hams from Moscow to Montevideo is celebrated by Danny Gregory and Paul Sahre in the colorful **HELLO WORLD: A LIFE IN HAM RADIO** (Princeton Architectural Press). Hams, as Gregory and Sahre discovered, "come in all shapes and sizes and live all over the world." Although ham radio is generally considered an arcane pastime reserved for microhenry-obsessed nerds, recent estimates put the number of worldwide hams at more than two million, including such devoted practitioners as Marlon Brando (ham call sign FO5GJ), Donny Osmond (WD4SKT), George Pataki (K2ZCZ), and King Juan Carlos of Spain (EA0JC).

The first hams, or narrowcasters, pop up in Edward D. Miller's **EMERGENCY BROADCASTING** (Temple University Press), a rumination on the nature and meaning of early radio. Miller, who likens radio in the nineteen-thirties to the Internet in its first decade, gives us the untamed era of Herbert Morrison's broadcast of the Hindenburg disaster and Orson Welles' "War of the Worlds." In those days, voices in the ether inspired utopian visions, prompting *Collier's* to assert that radio would create a "strong and well-knit people." It's a notion that today's hams—ensconced in the purple glow of their transmitters—continue to broadcast.

—Mark Rozzo

elry sessions is devoted to items from the collection of the philanthropist Lillian Schuman Goldman. A pair of diamond ear pendants from the firm of Tiffany & Co. (estimated to sell for more than two million dollars) is the highlight of the event. (20 Rockefeller Plaza, at 49th St. 212-636-2000.)

DOYLE

April 9 at 10 A.M.: Couture, textiles, and accessories, including fashions by Worth, Dior, and Givenchy. (175 E. 87th St. 212-427-2730.)

SWANN

April 10 at 10:30 A.M.: A sale of rare books on art, economics (a first edition of Adam Smith's "The Wealth of Nations"), gastronomy, and other subjects, along with a selection of illuminated manuscripts and a broad range of literary works (including a three-volume first edition of "Great Expectations"). ♦ April 12 at 1: "Space Exploration," a sale of artifacts, charts, photographs, models, and other items related to the American and Soviet space programs. ♦ April 14 at 10:30 A.M.: Printed books from the sixteenth through the nineteenth centuries, along with a selection of medical literature. (104 E. 25th St. 212-254-4710.)

NEW YORK

ANTIQUARIAN BOOK FAIR

The forty-third annual fair arrives, offering a broad selection of rare books, manuscripts, autographs, maps, and ephemera. (7th Regiment Armory, Park Ave. at 66th St. 212-777-5218. April 10-13.)

CLASSICAL MUSIC OPERA

METROPOLITAN OPERA

James Levine's Met is an impregnable House of Strauss: no other composer's operas receive such consistently fine treatment. And the Met's revival of Elijah Moshinsky's 1993 production of "Ariadne auf Naxos" is yet another feast, thanks largely to Natalie Dessay, as the flirtatious comedienne, Zerbinetta: not even acrobatic tricks can interrupt her gleaming bursts of coloratura, and her portrayal is as seductive as ever. The cast also includes Richard Margison (a rock-steady Bacchus), Christine Brewer (in her debut, as Ariadne), and Kristine Jepson (as the Composer); Levine conducts. (April 9 at 7:30 and April 12 at 8:30. These are the final performances.) ♦ "La Bohème," with Hei-Kyung Hong, Angela Maria Blasi, Frank Lopardo, and Mariusz Kwiecien; Julius Rudel. (April 10 at 7:30.) ♦ "Nabucco," with Susan Neves (as Abigail), Elizabeth Bishop, Jianyi Zhang, Lado Ataneli (as Nabucco), and Paata Burchuladze; Levine. (April 11 at 8. This is the final performance.) ♦ Plácido Domingo leads the cast in a revival of Otto Schenk's production of "Parsifal," with Violeta Urmana, Falk Struckmann, Nikolai Putilin, René Pape, and Eric Halfvarson; Valery Gergiev. (April 12 at noon.) ♦ With Linda Watson replacing Urmana. (April 15 at 6:30.) ♦ The season premiere of Jonathan Miller's production of Stravinsky's "The Rake's Progress," with Dawn Upshaw, Stephanie Blythe, Paul Groves, and Samuel Ramey; Levine. (April 14 at 8.) (Metropolitan Opera House. 212-362-6000.)

NEW YORK CITY OPERA

A new production (by Chas Raider-Shieber) of Handel's "Flavio," a romantic tragicomedy set in Britain's mythical past, with Jennifer Aylmer, Maria Zifchak, David Walker, and Bejun Mehta, among others; George Manahan conducts. (April 9 and April 15 at 7:30 and April 12 at 1:30.) ♦ James Robinson's inventive 2001 production of "La Bohème," set on the eve of the First World War, returns with Angela Marambaio, Adina Aaron, Gerard Powers, and Michael Corvino in the leading roles; Gerald Steichen. (April 10 at 7:30 and April 12 at 8.) ♦ "Carmen," with Katharine Goeldner (in the title

role), Nicolle Foland, Carl Tanner, and Paulo Szot; Joseph Rescigno. (April 11 at 8 and April 13 at 1:30.) (New York State Theatre. 212-307-4100.)

ROBERT ASHLEY'S "CELESTIAL EXCURSIONS" Ashley has spent a long and notable career expanding the possibilities of music theatre, building his works on multiple layers of computer-manipulated language (from sources as disparate as "The Tibetan Book of the Dead" and *Forbes* magazine), music, movement, and imagery; the results can be as weirdly lyrical as they are provocative. For his latest opera, he turns his attention to the language of elderly people; his performers—most of them longtime colleagues—include such prominent avant-garders as the singers



The Kitchen presents the American premiere of Robert Ashley's latest opera, "Celestial Excursions," beginning April 9.

Thomas Buckner and Joan La Barbara, the pianist "Blue" Gene Tyranny, and the performance artist Joan Jonas. (The Kitchen, 512 W. 19th St. 212-255-5793. April 9-12 at 8. Through April 19.)

ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC

This season's Berlioz festival at Lincoln Center has enjoyed its share of heaven-storming works, but Colin Davis will close it with a smile when he conducts an elaborate concert version (directed by Edward Berkeley) of "Béatrice et Bénédict," the composer's wry and touching operatic adaptation of "Much Ado About Nothing." A group of actors (including Harriet Harris, David Hyde Pierce, and Philip Bosco) will recite the extensive spoken dialogue in English, alternating with a team of singers (featuring Susanne Mentzer and Gordon Gietz) who perform the music in the original French; the Westminster Symphonic Choir assists. (Avery Fisher Hall. 212-875-5656. April 9-10 at 7:30 and April 12 at 8.)

AMERICAN SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA:

"THE CIRCLE OF SHOSTAKOVICH"

"Circle" is a bit of a stretch, since the other two composers on this program—Gavriil Popov and Sergei Prokofiev—were as much competitors as colleagues. The strength of Popov's fierce and disso-

nant First Symphony earned him comparison to Shostakovich, but, unlike Shostakovich, he never fully recovered his creative energies after Stalin's purges of the nineteen-thirties; Prokofiev's Piano Concerto No. 4, written for but rejected by the one-armed pianist Paul Wittgenstein, was not heard until after the composer's death. Gary Graffman, a more genial artist, plays it with the A.S.O. and Leon Botstein, who will close the concert with Shostakovich's Symphony No. 6. (Avery Fisher Hall. 212-721-6500. April 11 at 8.)

MOSCOW SOLOISTS

Bach's Brandenburg Concerto No. 6 is the starting point for a program of Britten ("Lachrymae," with the brilliant violinist Yuri Bashmet, their conductor, as soloist), Takemitsu, and Tchaikovsky ("Souvenir de Florence"). (Carnegie Hall. 212-247-7800. April 12 at 7:30.)

NATIONAL SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA OF IRELAND

The ensemble makes its New York debut with a program of music by Brahms, Beethoven (the Piano Concerto No. 4, with the pianist John O'Connor), and the American-born composer Jane O'Leary. Gerhard Markson conducts. (Avery Fisher Hall. 212-721-6500. April 13 at 3.)

CHANTICLEER:

"THE DIVINE TAPESTRY"

The fine men of Chanticleer bring their pastel timbre and dead-on musicianship to a typically wide-ranging program—Mass settings from the Middle Ages to the nineteen-nineties (including music by Dufay, Tallis, Messiaen, John Tavener, and Augusta Read Thomas). (Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St. 212-570-3949. April 13 at 8.)

RECITALS

BARGEMUSIC

April 10 at 7:30: The pianists Donald Pirone and Gerald Robbins offer an appealing program of four-hands music by Mozart, Schubert, Rachmaninoff, Moszkowski, and Ravel (the "Mother Goose" Suite). ♦ April 11-12 at 7:30: A concert of Franck (the Violin Sonata), Saint-Saëns, and Debussy, performed by the violinist Mark Peskanov and the pianist Pascal Devoyon. ♦ April 13 at 4: Glenn Dicterow, the Philharmonic's concertmaster, makes a distinguished debut at the barge, joining with Robbins, the violist Karen Dreyfus, and the cellist Frederick Zlotkin for a program of Turina, Dvořák, and Fauré (the Piano Quartet in C Minor). (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 718-624-2083.)

STEFAN WOLPE CENTENNIAL FESTIVAL

The latest concert in a season-long series showcases Wolpe's influence on American composers, combining rare Wolpe (including "Enactments," for three pianos) with music by Mamlok, Feldman ("The Viola in My Life"), Tony Prowbo, and others. The performers include the violist Stephanie Griffin and the pianist Cheryl Seltzer. (Americas Society, Park Ave. at 68th St. 212-277-8359. April 10 at 7:30.)

AZURE ENSEMBLE: "WIRED FOR SOUND"

Premières by Alice Shields, Pablo Ortiz, and Peter Robles ("The Last Hiding Places of Snow," a song cycle set to poetry by Galway Kinnell) highlight the ensemble's latest concert, which features such performers as the flutist Susan Glaser and the pianist Christopher Oldfather. (Merkin Concert Hall. 212-501-3330. April 10 at 8.)

ROULETTE

The Sirius String Quartet (performing music by such hardcore downtowners as Nick Didkovsky and Elliott Sharp) starts off the third week of the performance space's spring series, which also includes appearances by the San Francisco-based avant-cabaret vixen Amy X Neuberg and the com-

RICCARDO VECCHIO

posers Ernesto Klar and Phil Kline. (228 West Broadway. 212-219-8242. April 10 at 8:30. For a full schedule of events, see www.roulette.org.)

BEAUX ARTS TRIO

The trio—featuring their exciting young violinist, Daniel Hope—play a program of Beethoven, Mendelssohn (the Piano Trio in D Minor), and Lowell Liebermann. (Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St. 212-570-3949. April 11 at 8.)

CHAMBER MUSIC SOCIETY OF LINCOLN CENTER

The young Miami String Quartet, a superb, rich-toned group in the Romantic tradition, join with the violist Paul Neubauer and the pianist André-Michel Schub for a program of Haydn, Schumann, Brahms (the String Quintet in F Major), and Bruce Adolph (a New York premiere). (Alice Tully Hall. 212-875-5788. April 11 at 8 and April 13 at 5.)

GIL SHAHAM AND GÖRAN SÖLLSCHER

The winning violinist and his guitarist friend play duos by Bach, Schubert (the “Arpeggione” Sonata), Paganini, and Piazzolla. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 212-415-5500. April 12 at 8.)

MATTHIAS GOERNE

Among the many aspirants to the baritone throne of Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau, Goerne has a dark, suave voice and a sure dramatic sense. Here, the pianist Eric Schneider joins him for a recital of Schubert and Wolf (including the rarely heard “Michelangelo Songs”) at Alice Tully Hall. (212-721-6500. April 12 at 8.)

NEW YORK FESTIVAL OF SONG:

“SOME ENCHANTED APRIL IN NEW YORK” Two pooh-bahs of popular song—Richard Rodgers and Vernon Duke—are toasted in the festival’s latest program, a semi-staged affair (directed by Laurence Maslon) featuring performances by Sylvia McNair,

Judy Kaye, and Joseph Kaiser; the invaluable Steven Blier is at the piano. (Kaye Playhouse, Hunter College, Park Ave. at 68th St. 212-772-4448. April 12 at 8.)

VERBRUGGEN ENSEMBLE

The noted Dutch ensemble (headed by the recorder player Marion Verbruggen) performs music by Bach, Telemann, Vivaldi, and others. (Frick Collection, 1 E. 70th St. 212-288-0700. April 13 at 5.)

SUSAN GRAHAM

The delightful mezzo-soprano brings her disarming style and technical élan to a Franco-German program of Berg (the “Seven Early Songs”), Brahms, Debussy, Poulenc, and the operetta masters Messager and Simons (“C’est ça la vie, c’est ça l’amour”). Malcolm Martineau accompanies her. (Carnegie Hall. 212-247-7800. April 14 at 7:30.)

THOMAS MEGLIORANZA

The up-and-coming American baritone, winner of the 2002 Concert Artists Guild competition, offers an exceptionally diverse program of Schumann (the “Eichendorff Liederkreis”), Debussy, Eisler (numbers from the “Hollywood Songbook”), and Blitzstein, along with a world premiere from the noted young song composer Jorge Martin (“Plundered Hearts,” on a text by J. D. McClatchy). (Weill Recital Hall, Carnegie Hall. 212-333-5200. April 15 at 7:30.)

YEFIM BRONFMAN

The bravura-piano powerhouse returns to Carnegie Hall, mixing some Salonen (“Dichotomie”) and some light Beethoven (the Sonata No. 7 in D Major) with music by Rachmaninoff and Prokofiev (the Sonata No. 7 in B-Flat Major). (212-247-7800. April 15 at 7:30.)

ABOVE AND BEYOND

PEOPLE'S POETRY GATHERING

This biennial downtown festival features more than a hundred events, this time around focussing mostly on the epic and the ballad. Highlights in-

clude readings from the Sumerian tale of Gilgamesh, a day-long reading of the Odyssey on the tall ship Peking, and a midnight reading of “The Raven” in the Marble Cemetery. Anchoring the festivities are a tribute to Langston Hughes (with Ricky Ian Gordon’s musical setting of Hughes’s poems, a lecture on the poet’s life by Daryl Pinkney, and a reading of his work by David Mills) and a series of programs dedicated to exploring the work of Alan Lomax, the folk-music historian and archivist who died last year. (For more information, visit www.peoplespoetry.org or call 212-529-1955. April 11-13.)

READINGS

April 9 at 8: Bob Holman, Fisher Stevens, Ed Sanders, Jim Carroll, John Ventimiglia, and other writers, actors, and musicians gather at the Poetry Project to read from a recently published collection of Jack Kerouac’s haikus. (St. Mark’s In-the-Bouwerie, Second Ave. at 10th St. 212-674-0910.) ♦ April 10 at 7: Vijay Seshadri reads from his collection of poems, “Wild Kingdom.” (South Street Seaport Museum, 213 Water St. 212-748-8735.) ♦ April 11 at 7: The writer Ben Greenman hosts, and reads at, an event featuring the *McSweeney’s* contributors Eric Bogosian, Jonathan Ames, and Sean Wilentz. The band One Ring Zero will also be on hand. (Galapagos, 70 N. 6th St., Williamsburg, Brooklyn. 718-782-5188.)

TALKS

April 9 at 5:30: The reporter Sonia Nazario talks with the television news correspondent Morley Safer about war reporting and the power of the image in international media. (H.B.O. Theatre, Sixth Ave. at 42nd St. For reservations, which are required, call 718-488-1153.) ♦ April 11 at 6:30: The cartoonists Gary Panter, Art Spiegelman, and Chris Ware consider Henry Darger’s influence on narrative and composition in contemporary comics. (American Folk Art Museum, 45 W. 53rd St. 212-265-1040.)

TABLES FOR TWO



NANNI

146 E. 46th St. (212-697-4161)—“You knew Nanni?” the woman at the coat-check counter asked the man by the wall of press clippings; he was telling his companion what the place was like back in the seventies, when Luigi Nanni ran what was widely regarded as the best Italian restaurant in town. When the patron nodded, the woman lowered her voice to a hush. “He died five years ago,” she said. Nanni’s easy-to-miss establishment, just east of Grand Central, still hides behind a battered awning under a while-u-wait income-tax agency. It remains a monument to a time when “real” Italian dining, New York-style, meant a décor of sunny travel posters and tasselled table lamps, black-jacketed waiters, and specials that offered slight variations on menu items (veal scaloppine—with prosciutto and sage). Some years ago, the posters gave way to frescoes, but otherwise the owner and chef, an intense figure the size of Willie Shoemaker, would find things just the way they were in 1967, when he opened for business.

Since the tiny, austere dining room is generally packed with people who seem to regard it as a second home, a night at Nanni can become as clamorous as the roast-lamb scene in “My Big Fat Greek Wedding.” But once the parade of classic dishes begins (risotto with wild mushrooms, swordfish with capers, chicken with garlic, tomato, and peppers), things settle down to a comfortable roar. A recent dinner for two included capellini in brodo, or angel hair in a rich golden broth; arugula and endive salad; squid in a spicy tomato casserole; a massive veal chop; and the zabaglione that Nanni used to make at the table. “Has anything on the menu changed since Nanni died?” the waiter was asked. He thought for a moment, then said, “No. Why should anything change? It’s Italian, isn’t it?” (Open weekdays for lunch and dinner and Saturdays for dinner only. Entrées \$18-\$29.)

—Charles Michener

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Borders’ World Music specialist Erika Grande says:

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MOVIES OPENING

ANGER MANAGEMENT

A patient-therapist comedy with Adam Sandler as a businessman who undergoes counselling sessions with an unorthodox psychiatrist (Jack Nicholson). Directed by Peter Segal. Opening April 11.

BETTER LUCK TOMORROW

Justin Lin directed this drama about high-achieving Asian-American high-school students who engage in gang-like activities. Set in Southern California. With Karin Anna Cheung, Parry Shen, and Jason Tobin. Opening April 11.

HOUSE OF 1,000 CORPSES

A horror movie written and directed by the musician Rob Zombie. The cast includes Sid Haig, Karen Black, Chris Hardwick, Bill Moseley, and Sheri Moon. Opening April 11.

XX/XY

Mark Ruffalo, Kathleen Robertson, and Maya Stange play three friends and former lovers who meet up in New York ten years after graduating from Sarah Lawrence. Written and directed by Austin Chick. Opening April 11.

FILM NOTES

BASIC

It's time for John Travolta to make another comeback. His latest throwaway performance—as an ex-Army Ranger who investigates a combat mystery—seems as manufactured as his newly buffed-up body. Even worse, he's already made this film; last time, it was called "The General's Daughter." The screenplay, involving a missing squad of Marines, is an exhausting labyrinth, and John McTiernan ("Die Hard") directs with such a whirling frenzy, it's surprising that pieces of his camera aren't embedded in the film.—*Bruce Diones* (Empire 25, First & 62nd Cinemas, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, 34th Street Theatre, and Village Theatre VII.)

CET AMOUR-LÀ

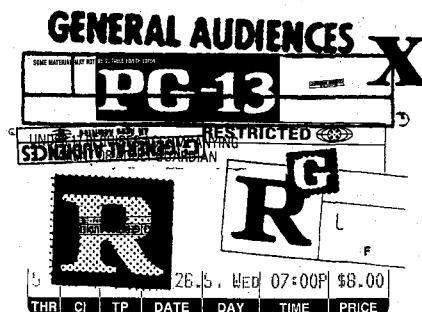
Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema. (Lincoln Plaza Cinemas and Quad Cinema.)

CITY OF GOD

Just how far into your face can a movie get? This one has every intention of leaving you scalded and bruised. Set in Rio de Janeiro, it was directed by Fernando Meirelles, who tries every trick known to cameramen: freeze frames, whip pans, multiple dissolves, slow motion, double motion, any kind of motion. The object is to keep pace with his characters, the young and dispossessed of the Brazilian slums. The movie hastens roughly from the nineteen-sixties to the eighties, as we watch the boys either die or grow old before their time. The result is a jolting ride, but such is the skill on show that we run the risk of being too exhilarated to notice every death; does the film convince in its plea for the forgotten poor, or are we encouraged to forget them as they fall? In Portuguese.—*Anthony Lane* (Reviewed in our issue of 1/20/03.) (Angelika Film Center, BAM Rose Cinemas, Chelsea Cinemas, and Kew Gardens Cinema.)

DREAMCATCHER

This big-budget horror film, based on a novel by Stephen King and directed by Lawrence Kasdan, features a lot of pretty New England snow and four male friends (Thomas Jane, Jason Lee, Damian Lewis, and Timothy Olyphant) held together by a special past. But still, in the end, it's an abominable-worm picture. About three feet long, tubular, and slithering, the creature enters people's bodies somehow or other and then tears through their guts. All in all, it's not an unimpressive worm, but we've seen it before. As for the plot, it seems that alien creatures have landed, and an American military force, led by a mad colonel (Morgan Freeman), is out to quarantine the area and destroy the humans who have been infected. Or something like that. Incoherent and repulsive, "Dreamcatcher" is a repetitive procession of arbitrary scares and thrills without a unifying visual or poetic idea. The veteran William Goldman wrote the screenplay with Kasdan.—*David Denby*



(3/31/03) (Battery Park 16, Chelsea Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, 42nd Street E Walk, Kips Bay Theatre, Orpheum VII, Sutton 1 and 2, 34th Street Theatre, and Union Square.)

FELLINI: I'M A BORN LIAR

Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema. (Film Forum.)



THE GOOD THIEF

Nick Nolte plays Bob, half French, half American, whose days—and, more spectacularly, his nights—are spent in Nice. He is a chronic gambler and a heroin addict. He also used to be a thief, and Neil Jordan's movie shows him circling back to his old ways, as a sumptuous collection of paintings lures him into action—Bob is a bear, and his honey is fine art. With him are a bunch of henchmen, notably the smooth Raoul (Gérard Darmon); against him is a local detective (Tchéky Karyo), although the two of them are old, if not trusted, friends. The movie comes alive in the hero's presence: the camera frame is crammed with Nolte's shambling bulk, and we watch the wasting of his powers and his lunges at respectability. As a heist movie, however, this is a dud, the plot splintering badly in the middle. With Nolte to rely on, why does Jordan allow his attention to be distracted by lesser figures? Happily, the finale is a smooth run, as Bob and a young companion (Nutsa Kukhianidze) make hay at the tables of a casino. The material is heavily adapted from Jean-Pierre Melville's "Bob le Flambeur," with some patches of dialogue preserved intact.—*A.L.* (4/7/03) (Cinema 1, Empire 25, Lincoln Square, and Village Theatre VII.)

HEAD OF STATE

Chris Rock will make a great movie someday, but this lame comedy, which he directed and co-wrote, is as stale as yesterday's malt liquor. The promising setup has Rock as a Washington, D.C., alderman who's tapped to run for President so that he'll lose, paving the way for another candidate. The film could have been an all-out satiric barrage like "Hollywood Shuffle" or a culturally acute comedy like "Barbershop." Instead, it's one tepid racial joke after another, interspersed with Rock's cringe-inducing sermonizing about the plight of the inner city. The film is almost saved by the support of Bernie Mac, who cuts a swath through the talk-show circuit as a menacing, defensive bail bondsman and Vice-Presidential candidate.—*Michael Agger* (Chelsea West, 84th Street Sixplex, First & 62nd Cinemas, 42nd Street E Walk, Kips Bay Theatre, Metro Twin, Orpheum VII, and 34th Street Theatre.)

THE HUNTED

There's trouble in the Pacific Northwest: Benicio Del Toro is in the woods, protecting the deer. A former U.S. Army assassin, he's been trained in wilderness tracking and hand-to-hand combat, but a tour of duty in Bosnia sent him over the edge. This is bad news for the master tracker L. T. Bonham (Tommy Lee Jones), happily retired to British Columbia. After Del Toro takes out two hunters, the F.B.I. picks up Jones in a helicopter and charges him with bringing in his former protégé. This manly movie belongs to the veteran director William Friedkin, who seems to have lost any idea of how to show the art of tracking onscreen. By the evidence presented here, it seems to mean smelling your fingers, staring into tree branches, and walking oddly, as though you'd pulled a muscle.—*M.A.* (Battery Park 16, Empire 25, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, New York Twin, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, 34th Street Theatre, and Village Theatre VII.)

IRREVERSIBLE

A thoroughly nasty piece of work, though not an empty or a foolish one: the director, Gaspar Noé, gives every sign of careful cleverness. His film tells of a young couple (Monica Bellucci and Vincent Cassel) who make love, go to a Paris party, and leave separately. She is raped and beaten; he pursues the assailant and takes what he believes to be revenge. The whole story runs backward, beginning with death and violation and rewinding to a nice afternoon, a

SUPERSTAR From 1964 to 1974, the photographer William Klein gained extraordinary access to the turbulent public and private life of boxing's most charismatic figure at the height of his career. A new print of Klein's monumental two-part portrait, "Muhammad Ali: The Greatest," opens at Film Forum on April 11.



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bright white screen, and the joyful strains of Beethoven. The irony is pure acid: any pleasure that we meet later in the film is spoiled and scarred by the events of the first half, which are not so much irreversible as unwatchable. The trouble is that the picture has fallen victim to its own reputation; from here on, despite the seriousness of Noé's intentions, he will be known as the Man Who Showed Too Much. In French.—A.L. (3/10/03) (Angelika Film Center.)

JONAH WHO WILL BE 25 IN THE YEAR 2000
A whirling political comedy about the seventies' lunatic fringe of people in their twenties and thirties, each with his own answers to the problems of society. This film, a play of ideas with the laconic irony of Renoir's "Boudu Saved from Drowning" and Buñuel's "The Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie," stays suspended in the air, spinning—a marvellous toy, weightless, yet precise and controlled. The director, Alain Tanner, and his co-writer, John Berger, are willing to entertain possibilities for social rebirth even if they're cracked or pickled. It's a romantic, mystic, utopian comedy—an Easter fable, with a dialectical bunny. Set in Geneva (the birthplace of Rousseau). Originally released in 1976. In French.—Pauline Kael (Walter Reade Theatre; April 11, April 13, and April 15.)

LAUREL CANYON

After the solemnities of "High Art," the director Lisa Cholodenko has turned to lighter matters: specifically, what to do if your mother is an unreconstructed hippie. Sam (Christian Bale) takes his fiancée, Alex (Kate Beckinsale), home to California to meet his mom, Jane (Frances McDormand), a record producer whose walls of photographs bear testament to a life misspent in rock. She is all the family that Sam has but far more than he wants, especially since Jane's idea of quality time is to come within an inch of seducing her son's girlfriend while bringing a shameless young rock star (Alessandro Nivola) along for the ride. The movie has poise and a lightly perspiring sexiness, but also an uncertain sense of humor, and you end up rooting for the squares—especially Sam and his colleague Sara (Natascha McElhone), who have more fun in the front of a Volvo than seems either practical or legal. The soundtrack is full of ersatz British pop, so tuneless and squally that it could almost be the real thing.—A.L. (3/10/03) (BAM Rose Cinemas, Empire 25, First & 62nd Cinemas, Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, and Union Square.)

LEVITY

Anything but. Ed Solomon's dreary debut film about alienation and redemption stars Billy Bob Thornton (in a Jesus wig) as an ex-con revisiting the scene of his crime. He's befriended by a group of sad sacks (Morgan Freeman, Holly Hunter, and Kirsten Dunst, among others) and responds with endless bouts of haunted introspection.—B.D. (Empire 25, First & 62nd Cinemas, and Union Square.)

THE MAN WITHOUT A PAST

A huge Finn (Markku Peltola), unnamed and undemonstrative, is beaten up and left for dead. Knowing almost nothing of his former life, he begins a new one—living in a converted storage container on the Helsinki waterfront, befriendng a dog, and cooking regrettable meals for a quiet blonde (Kati Outinen) from the Salvation Army. The director is Aki Kaurismäki, and even by his rigorous standards this is laconic fare—long, peaceful silences broken by tentative conversation and the steady puff of cigarettes. The result is oddly affecting: you come to feel not just sympathy for the hero, with his bandaged brow and utter want of self-pity, but even a mild envy for his uncluttered existence. In Finnish.—A.L. (4/7/03) (Lincoln Plaza Cinemas and Quad Cinema.)

OLD SCHOOL

Vince Vaughn, tall and handsome, with a widow's peak and a roving eye, is easily the most untrustworthy man in the movies since the advent of Bill Murray. In this genial hit movie, Vaughn is operating in low gear as a cocky salesman; the role isn't enough for him, but he's still hilarious, and so, at times, is the movie. Written (with many collaborators) and directed by Todd Phillips and assembled under the benevolent auspices of the comedy veteran Ivan Reitman, "Old School" follows a trio of thirtyish losers unable to face responsibility: the earnest and baffled Mitch (Luke Wilson); the hapless and uninhibited Frank (Will Ferrell); and the flimflamming wise guy

Beanie (Vaughn). Together, the three open a frat house at the edge of some distinguished seat of higher learning. Each of the leads is funny in his own style, especially Ferrell, who has an almost frighteningly infantile quality.—D.D. (3/17/03) (Battery Park 16, Empire 25, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, 34th Street Theatre, and Union Square.)

THE PIANIST

Roman Polanski's drama about the survival of a real-life Polish Jew, the pianist Wladyslaw Szpilman (Adrien Brody), during the grim days of the Holocaust is a movie that has been perfectly produced. The sense of scale and detail is exact, and the violence is neither exaggerated nor minimized but presented

with a modest but exploratory willingness.—D.D. (3/31/03) (Chelsea Cinemas, Eastside Playhouse, Empire 25, and Sunshine Cinema.)

ROSA LUXEMBERG

In this 1986 bio-pic, the director Margarethe von Trotta depicts the brilliant radical writer, orator, and organizer, who, at the height of her pre-Great War fame, was known throughout the world as Red Rosa. Here, played by Barbara Sukowa, she seems more like Our Lady of the Lost Cause. The splintered, time-hopping scenes that von Trotta uses to spell out Luxemburg's story don't so much depict the evolution of her revolutionary thoughts as demonstrate their rightness and sanctity. Until she breaks



Opening April 11, Justin Lin's "Better Luck Tomorrow."

with clear-eyed accuracy. Yet this is not a work of great originality or imagination. Its protagonist lacks depth, and the theme of survival through hiding is, by its very nature, redundant. The playwright Ronald Harwood adapted the 1946 book that Szpilman wrote about his experiences without attempting to open up the hero at all. Is he ashamed, defiant, guilty? Grateful for his luck? We haven't a clue. His survival is an anomaly, a mistake, a joke—and that may be why the story appealed to Polanski. Shot largely in Warsaw.—D.D. (1/13/03) (Battery Park 16, East 86th Street Cinemas, Empire 25, First & 62nd Cinemas, Kew Gardens Cinema, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, 19th Street East 6, and Village Theatre VII.)

RAISING VICTOR VARGAS

A lovely small-scale comedy about the commonplace mating rituals in a Dominican section of Manhattan. It's summer, and everyone is on the prowl, but the neighborhood is friendly and peaceful; chickens run through the alleys, and small gardens pop up here and there among the projects. The boys act cocky even when they're unsure of themselves, and the girls pretend they don't need boys. Nothing very important happens, but, moment by moment, the movie is alive with the play of gestures and glances, the faces of aggression and withdrawal. Victor Rasuk is well cast as the good-looking local Casanova, perhaps eighteen years old, and Judy Marte is the wary young beauty who gets him to change his style. The writer-director Peter Sollett stays close to the actors, all nonprofessionals, and they greet the camera

with Germany's Social Democratic Party and protests the First World War, the ideological squabbling simply eats up screen time. And von Trotta pushes Luxemburg's poetic, nature-loving sensitivity to the max; at one point, we see her as a child, hoping to stay up through the night to watch a rose open (a red rose, naturally). In German and Polish.—Michael Sragow (BAM Rose Cinemas; April 10.)

SPIRITED AWAY

In his native Japan, the animator-director Hayao Miyazaki is considered a national treasure, and this movie, which he came out of retirement to complete, recently surpassed "Titanic" as that country's highest-grossing picture. It's an amazing work, filled with a visual intelligence that's meticulously composed and obscenely clever. Miyazaki's playful aesthetic is like a Japanese word that can't be adequately translated, best approximated as part Spielberg, part Dr. Seuss. American audiences may be put off at first by a film that is essentially a cartoon about a fearful ten-year-old girl. But as the hero, Chihiro, sees her parents turned into swine and flees into an alternate world filled with the creatures of Japanese mythology and of Miyazaki's own invention, any distracting sense of childishness falls away. Left to savor are virtuosos touches, like a flock of birds that becomes useless paper, a train that glides along the surface of a lake, and one of the great villains of all time, Yubaba, who looks like a bobble-headed grandmother on speed.—M.A. (Battery Park 16, Empire 25, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, 64th and 2nd, and Union Square.)

ADRIAN TOMINE

TEARS OF THE SUN

A rousing celebration of American military expertise, but one pricked by conscience. The stoical Lieutenant A. K. Waters (Bruce Willis) leads a crack unit of Navy SEALs into a civil conflict in Nigeria between Muslims and Christians. Their mission is to rescue an Italian-born American citizen (Monica Bellucci), a doctor operating a Catholic missionary hospital. Bellucci, a flaming dark beauty with a sumptuous décolletage, runs through the jungle with her shirt partly open. Because of such absurdities, and the general atmosphere of American noblesse oblige, skeptics have dismissed the movie as an embarrassing crock—another contrived occasion for U.S. soldiers to demonstrate their nobility while killing a great many nasty-looking Africans. Baldly stated, this is true, but the movie, directed by Antoine Fuqua, has been made with ravishing skill. The cinematographer Mauro Fiore does wonders matching the natural light from shot to shot.—*D.D.* (3/17/03) (Battery Park 16, Empire 25, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, 64th and 2nd, and Union Square.)

THE 39 STEPS

This suave, amusing 1935 spy melodrama is directed with so sure a touch that the suspense is charged with wit; it's one of the three or four best things Alfred Hitchcock ever did. The lead, Robert Donat, was that rarity among English actors: a performer with both personal warmth and professional skill. The heroine is Madeleine Carroll. Hitchcock paired them off by the mischievous use of a gimmick: a man and a woman who detest each other are handcuffed together. Among Hitchcock's other pleasing perversities was the casting of Godfrey Tearle, who looked astonishingly like Franklin Delano Roosevelt, as the chief enemy agent. The film also has one of his rare emotionally felt sequences: the brief, chilling scenes between Peggy Ashcroft and John Laurie as a mismatched couple joined together by real chains.—*P.K.* (Moving Image; April 13.)

TODD MOODO

How could a movie with Marcello Mastroianni, Mariangela Melato, Michel Piccoli, Renato Salvatori, and Gian Maria Volonté, with sets by Dante Ferretti, music by Ennio Morricone, and direction by Elio Petri, fall into near-total obscurity? Think of it as Petri's equivalent of Robert Altman's "Quintet." Petri was a master of paranoia in "We Still Kill the Old Way" and "Investigation of a Citizen Above Suspicion," where he magnified the threatening, horrific qualities of realistic settings. But this picture, drawn from Leonard Sciascia's parable of Italian political life, takes place in an already stylized Catholic retreat for members of the ruling class, located outside Rome and built around some ancient catacombs. The combination of Petri's cryptic, bloody imagery and the plot's cryptic, bloody assassinations agitates the audience, then numbs it. This is a squirm movie; afterward you'll feel like exclaiming, "I sat through the whole thing!"—*M.S.* (Gramercy Theatre; April 10.)

ALSO PLAYING

BRINGING DOWN THE HOUSE

Battery Park 16, Cinema 3, 84th Street Sixplex, Empire 25, Kips Bay Theatre, Orpheum VII, 34th Street Theatre, and Union Square.

CHICAGO (1/6/03)

Battery Park 16, Chelsea West, Cinema 2, 84th Street Sixplex, 42nd Street E Walk, Kips Bay Theatre, Metro Twin, 34th Street Theatre, Union Square, and Ziegfeld.

THE CORE

Astor Plaza, 59th Street East Cinema, 42nd Street E Walk, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, 34th Street Theatre, and Village Theatre VII.

THE GUYS

Union Square.

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Battery Park 16, 84th Street Sixplex, Empire 25,

Kips Bay Theatre, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, 64th and 2nd, 34th Street Theatre, and Village Theatre VII.

STEVE

Film Forum.

THEATRE ADDRESSES

Unless noted, call 212-777-FILM for show times.

Angelika Film Center, 18 W. Houston St.
Astor Plaza, 44th St. at Broadway.
BAM Rose Cinemas, 30 Lafayette Ave., Brooklyn.
Battery Park 16, West St. at Vesey St.
Beekman, Second Ave. at 66th St.
Chelsea Cinemas, 260 W. 23rd St.
Chelsea West, 333 W. 23rd St.
Cinemas 1, 2, and 3, Third Ave. at 60th St.
Cinema Village, 22 E. 12th St. (212-924-3363).
East 86th Street Cinemas, Third Ave. at 86th St.
84th Street Sixplex, Broadway at 84th St.
Empire 25, on 42nd St. near Eighth Ave. (212-398-3939).

59th Street East Cinema, 239 E. 59th St.
Film Forum, W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (212-727-8110).

First & 62nd Cinemas, 400 E. 62nd St.
42nd Street E Walk, 42nd St. near Eighth Ave.
Kew Gardens Cinema, 81-05 Lefferts Blvd., Queens (718-441-9835).

Kips Bay Theatre, Second Ave. at 32nd St.
Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, Broadway at 63rd St. (212-757-2280).

Lincoln Square, Broadway at 68th St.
New York Twin, Second Ave. at 66th St.
19th Street East 6, Broadway at 19th St.
Orpheum VII, Third Ave. at 86th St.
Paris, 4 W. 58th St. (212-688-3800).
Quad Cinema, 34 W. 13th St.

The Screening Room, 54 Varick St. (212-334-2100).

72nd Street East, Third Ave. at 71st St.
64th and 2nd, Second Ave. at 64th St.
62nd & Broadway, 62 W. 62nd St.
Sunshine Cinema, 139-143 E. Houston St.
Sutton 1 and 2, Third Ave. at 57th St.
34th Street Theatre, 312 W. 34th St.
Union Square, Broadway at 13th St.
Village East Cinemas, Second Ave. at 12th St.
Village Theatre VII, Third Ave. at 11th St.
Ziegfeld, 141 W. 54th St.

REVIVALS, CLASSICS, ETC.

Titles with a dagger are reviewed above.

AMERICAN MUSEUM OF THE MOVING IMAGE

35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria (718-784-0077)—Through May 11: "Home and Away," pairings of an American film and an international film by the same director. April 12 at 2: "The Blue Angel" (1930, Josef Von Sternberg; in German and English). ♦ April 12 at 4:30: "Blonde Venus" (1932, Von Sternberg). ♦ April 13 at 2: "The 39 Steps" (†). ♦ April 13 at 4: "North by Northwest" (1959, Alfred Hitchcock). ♦ Repertory nights. April 12-13 at 6:30: "Metropolis" (1926, Fritz Lang).

BAM ROSE CINEMAS

30 Lafayette Ave., Brooklyn (718-777-3456)—Through April 12: The Brooklyn Jewish Film Festival. April 9 at 4:30 and April 12 at 9:15: "Keep on Walking" (2000, Tana Ross et al.). ♦ April 9 at 6:15: "Foreign Sister" (2000, Dan Wolman; in Hebrew, Amharic, and English). ♦ April 9 at 9:30: "The Crucible" (1996, Nicholas Hytner). ♦ April 10 at 4:30: Shorts from the N.Y.U. film program. ♦ April 10 at 6:30: "Rosa Luxemburg" (†). ♦ April 10 at 9:45: "Robert Capa: In Love and War" (2003, Anne Makepeace). ♦ April 11 at 4: "The Inner Tour" (2001, Ra'anan Alexandrowicz). ♦ April 11 at 6:15: "The Way We Were" (1973, Sydney Pollack). ♦ April 11 at 9:30: "In the Mirror of Maya Deren" (2002, Martina Kudlacek). ♦

April 12 at 1:30: "The Mayor of the Upper West Side" (2003, Judd Ehrlich). ♦ April 12 at 4:15: "The Front" (1976, Martin Ritt). ♦ April 12 at 7: "The Last Letter" (2002, Frederick Wiseman; in French). ♦ In memory of Karel Reisz. April 13 at 2, 4:30, 6:50, and 9:10: "Saturday Night and Sunday Morning" (1960). ♦ Mario Bava films. April 14 at 4:30, 6:50, and 9:10: "Black Sabbath" (1963; in Italian). ♦ French women filmmakers. April 15 at 4:30 and 7: "Dry Cleaning" (1997, Anne Fontaine; in French).

FILM FORUM

W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (212-727-8110)—April 9-10 at 1, 3:10, 5:20, 7:40, and 9:50: "Investigation of a Citizen Above Suspicion" (1970, Elio Petri; in Italian). ♦ Starting April 11 at 1, 3:10, 5:30, 7:40, and 9:50: "Muhammad Ali: The Greatest" (1974, William Klein; in French).

FLORENCE GOULD HALL

55 E. 59th St. (212-315-6160)—Through May 20: The films of William Klein. April 9 at 7: Klein will speak about his work and introduce two short films. ♦ April 15 at 12:30, 3:30, 6:30, and 9: "Broadway by Light" (1958; in French) and "Who Are You Polly Magoo?" (1965-66; in French).

GRAMERCY THEATRE

127 E. 23rd St. (212-777-4900)—Through April 24: The films of Elio Petri. April 10 at 2: "Todo Modo" (†). ♦ April 11 at 8:30: "We Still Kill the Old Way" (1967; in Italian). ♦ April 13 at 2: "L'Assassino" (1961; in Italian). ♦ Through April 12: "Nicholas Ray, Writ Large," a twenty-three-film retrospective. April 10 at 8: "The American Friend" (1977, Wim Wenders; in German and English). ♦ April 11 at 3: "High Green Wall" (1954) and "We Can't Go Home Again" (1973-76). ♦ April 12 at 1: "The Savage Innocents" (1960). ♦ April 12 at 7:45: "Lightning Over Water" (1980; with Wenders). ♦ The experimental films of Wheeler Winston Dixon. April 11 at 6:30: Early shorts and other works. ♦ April 12 at 3:15: "Un Petit Examen, and Not So Damned Petit Either, or the Light Shining Over the Dark" (1975) and "An Evening with Chris Jangaard: The Decline and Fall of 1960s Britain" (1976). ♦ April 12 at 5:30: "What Can I Do?" (1993). ♦ Recent work from the New York-based filmmaker Jem Cohen. April 13 at 4: "Benjamin Smoke" (2000). ♦ April 13 at 6: "Instrument" (1999).

SUNSHINE CINEMA

139-143 E. Houston St. (212-358-0573)—Midnight movies. April 11-12: "American Psycho" (2000, Mary Harron).

THALIA THEATRE

Symphony Space, 2537 Broadway, at 95th St. (212-864-5400)—April 12 at 2, 3:45, and 5:30 and April 13 at 6:15, 8, and 9:45: "Power and Terror: Noam Chomsky in Our Times" (2002, John Junkerman). ♦ April 12 at 7:30 and 9:15 and April 13 at 1, 2:45, and 4:30: "The Trials of Henry Kissinger" (2002, Eugene Jarecki).

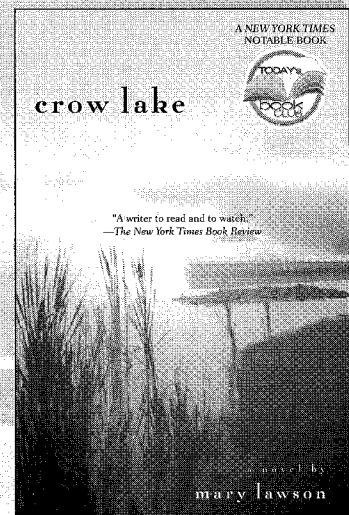
WALTER READE THEATRE

Lincoln Center (212-875-5600)—Through April 10: The New York African Film Festival. April 9 at 1:30 and 8:30 and April 10 at 2:45 and 9:30: "Waiting for Happiness" (2002, Abderrahmane Sissako; in Hassania). ♦ April 9 at 3:45 and April 10 at 7:30: "My Land, My Life" (2002, Rehah Desai). ♦ April 9 at 6 and April 10 at 4:45: "Wa'n Wina" (2001, Dumisani Phakathi; in English, Sotho, and Zulu). ♦ April 10 at 1: "Abouna" (2002, Mahamat-Saleh Haroun; in Chadian). ♦ Starting April 11: "The Middle of the World: Classic and Contemporary Swiss Cinema." April 11 at 1 and 7: "Les Petites Couleurs" (2002, Patricia Plattner; in French). ♦ April 11 at 3: "Romeo and Juliette in the Village" (1941, Hans Trommer and Valerien Schmidely; in German). ♦ April 11 at 4:45, April 13 at 4, and April 15 at 6:15: "Jonah Who Will Be 25 in the Year 2000" (†). ♦ April 13 at 6:15: "A Loving Father" (2002, Jacob Berger; in French, English, and Swedish). ♦ April 12 at 5: "Rapt" (1933, Dimitri Kirsanoff; in French). ♦ April 12 at 9:15: "Happiness Is a Warm Gun" (2001, Thomas Imbach; in German). ♦ April 13 at 1: "La Vocation d'André Carrel" (1925, Jean Choux; silent). ♦ April 15 at 3:30 and 8:30: "Jonas and Lila 'Til Tomorrow" (2000, Alain Tanner; in French).

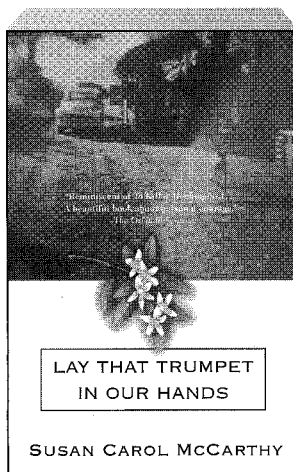
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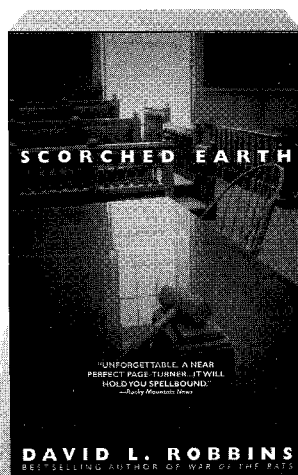
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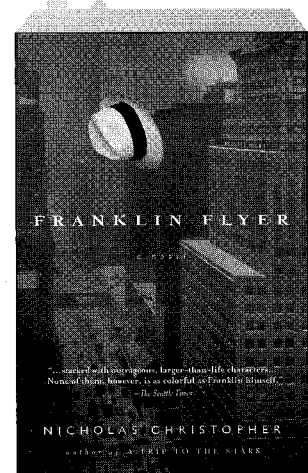
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THE TALK OF THE TOWN

COMMENT CAKEWALK



More than a year ago, Kenneth Adelman, a prominent national-security official in the Reagan Administration who now serves part time, with Richard Perle, on the Pentagon's Defense Policy Board, wrote a piece for the *Washington Post*. Its title was "Cakewalk in Iraq," and its payoff went like this: "I believe demolishing Hussein's military power and liberating Iraq would be a cakewalk. Let me give simple, responsible reasons: (1) It was a cakewalk last time; (2) they've become much weaker; (3) we've become much stronger; and (4) now we're playing for keeps." It's worth remembering that "last time"—that is, in 1991, when a genuine coalition of American, European, and Arab armies expelled Saddam Hussein from Kuwait—the ground war was over in a hundred hours. Next time, the reader was left to conclude, the job would be wrapped up even faster.

During the long runup to the present war in Iraq, assumptions of this kind came almost universally to be taken for granted. That was the work partly of high officials of the Bush Administration, partly of quasi-governmental outriders like Adelman and Perle, and partly of the neoconservative fedayeen of the op-ed

pages and the cable talkathons. In early March, for example, General Richard B. Myers, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, serenely anticipated "a short, short conflict." On the Sunday before the opening "shock and awe" barrage, Vice-President Cheney said that the war would go "relatively quickly," and that American troops would be "greeted as liberators." He went on, when asked if the fighting might prove to be long, costly, and bloody, "Well, I don't think it's likely to unfold that way." (As Dana Milbank, a *Washington Post* White House correspondent, noted, "Cheney has spoken that way for months.") Perle, still a Defense Policy Board member, though no longer its unpaid (if not exactly unremunerated) chairman, predicted on the eve of the war that it would last no longer than three weeks, adding, "And there is a good chance that it will be less than that." Last summer, he declared that "support for

Saddam, including within his military organization, will collapse at the first whiff of gunpowder." In the February 24th issue of *National Review*, David Frum, the former "axis of evil" White House speechwriter, wrote that "the Iraq fight itself is probably going to go very, very fast. The shooting should be over within just a very few days from when it starts."

To be sure, Administration officials themselves were usually careful to include what is known in the editorial trade as a "to be sure" sentence, acknowledging that you never can tell, nothing is guaranteed, there might be bumps in the road. (For example, right after asserting that the war would go quickly, Cheney added quickly, "But we can't count on that.") Still, the Administration's body English conveyed the conviction that Iraq was going to turn out just as neo-conservative enthusiasts like Adelman thought it would. "The media did not make up the expectation that they expected this to be a brief, essentially bloodless war," Marvin Kalb, a senior fellow at Harvard's Joan Shorenstein Center on the Press, Politics, and Public Policy, said the other day. "They got that from officials, from the Vice-President and the Joint Chiefs chairman." That authoritative expectation was widely accepted across the spectrum of opinion. There was no shortage either of debate on the diplomacy leading up to the war or of speculation about its sequel. But the war itself—its conduct, its political cost in the Arab world and elsewhere, its human reality—got relatively little attention. Its



speed and success were simply stipulated, by supporters and opponents alike. It was treated as a pair of parentheses with nothing in between. As a result, the entire discussion was distorted.

For the war's supporters, the rhetorical air has from the beginning rung with echoes of the Second World War: the Munich analogy, the demand for "unconditional surrender," the notion of the postwar occupation of Germany and Japan as a model. But the parallels are inexact, to say the least. This is not a war like the Second World War, and the difference is not simply one of scale. The Second World War was an existential war. To lose would have been to lose everything.

Whatever the price of victory, it had to be paid and exacted; the endurance and infliction of any amount of suffering and death seemed justified, even sanctified, by the imperative of defeating and destroying Nazism and its Japanese partner.

There is one way in which it is misleading to classify what is happening in Iraq as a war at all. Like Dunkirk, Midway, and the Bulge, it is only part of a larger enterprise. That is how it has been justified; that is how it must be judged. The aim of that larger enterprise is not to overthrow the Iraqi regime, however devoutly that is to be wished; it is to minimize the chances of another September 11th. The success of what might

more properly be called the Battle of Iraq must ultimately be measured by whether it brings us closer to that larger aim or leaves us farther away from it. The longer the fighting continues, the greater the suffering inflicted upon Iraqi civilians, the solidier Arab and Muslim (and European and Asian) anger toward the United States becomes, the bigger the pool of possible terrorist recruits grows—the more these things happen, the higher becomes the cost of victory, until, at some unknowable point, victory becomes defeat.

Too bleak? By the end of last week—even though American troops, who by all accounts have fought honorably and

MICHAEL KELLY (1957-2003)

A decade ago, a freelance journalist named Michael Kelly decided, with all due respect, to defy the government of the United States. The Pentagon had established such strict regulations on press coverage of the Gulf War that the human truth of the air war was successfully transformed, on the video screens of the briefing rooms, into a kind of bloodless game. Kelly decided that he would see the war without such mediation and set out for the desert. His reports from the front, like this one, in *The New Republic*, describing a "highway to hell," were boundlessly real:

Even in a mass attack, there is individuality. Quite a few of the dead had never made it out of their machines. Those were the worst, because they were both exploded and incinerated. One man had tried to escape to Iraq in a Kawasaki front-end loader. His remaining half-body lay hanging upside down and out of his exposed seat, the left side and bottom blown away to tatters, with the charred leg fully fifteen feet away. Nine men in a slat-sided supply truck were killed and flash-burned so swiftly that they remained, naked, skinned, and black wrecks, in the vulnerable positions of the moment of first impact. One body lay face down with his rear high in the air, as if he had been trying to burrow through the truck bed. His legs ended in fluttery, charcoaled remnants at mid thigh. He had a young, pretty face, slightly cherubic, with a pointed little chin; you could still see that even though it was mummified. Another man had been butterflyed by the bomb; the cavity of his body was cut wide open and his intestines and such were still coiled in their proper places, but cooked to ebony.

After the war, Michael wrote "Martyrs' Day," an extraordinary account of what he had seen, and then went to work

at the *Times*. Between 1994 and 1996, he was on the staff of *The New Yorker*, where he wrote Letter from Washington. He was a natural choice. Michael grew up on Capitol Hill—his parents, Tom and Marguerite, are both journalists there (his mother still writes a column on parenting for the *Washington Post*)—and his passion for the city and its politics was fierce. At the magazine, he was a warm and devoted colleague. That was the case everywhere he worked. After leaving *The New Yorker*, he went on to edit, successively, *The New Republic*, *National Journal*, and *The Atlantic Monthly*. At each stop, he had a reputation as a kind of ideal editor. He was devoted to his staff members, whether or not they agreed with his political views; he helped draw the best from experienced writers and had an uncanny way of discovering younger writers and making a home for them. His achievement at *The Atlantic Monthly* was especially striking; what had already been, in the best sense, a serious magazine became, under his guidance, even more ambitious, more attractive, and more surprising.

Last September, Michael stepped down as editor-in-chief of *The Atlantic* and became a kind of advisory editor and, once more, a writer; he also continued to write a weekly column for the op-ed page of the *Washington Post*, and he had started a book about the American steel industry. Then came the second Gulf War, and Michael became an "em-

bedded" correspondent with the 3rd Infantry Division. Last Friday morning, he was killed, along with one U.S. soldier, in a Humvee accident near Baghdad. The loss is greatest for his parents, his wife, Madelyn, and their two young boys, Tom and Jack. It is far from the only tragedy of this war, but, because we knew him so well, we feel it acutely, too.

As a polemicist, Michael was not demure. He was a conservative, in many ways, and an unambiguous supporter of this war. Just the other day, a copy of the new *Atlantic* arrived, and Michael's column, filed from Kuwait, was contemptuous of a "phony peace." Kind and good-humored as Michael was in person, his columns were tough and provocative in approach—and were meant to be so. In his last paragraph, he posed well the central question of what will face the world when the war is finally over:

No one argues much now about whether these [American] forces are capable of crushing even very serious opposition, and almost no one argues that Iraq offers serious opposition. Rather, the argument concerns whether the employment of this almost unfathomable power will be largely for good, leading to the liberation of a tyrannized people and the spread of freedom, or largely for bad, leading to imperialism and colonialism, with a consequent corruption of America's own values and freedoms. This question is real enough and more: probably the next hundred years hinges on the answer.

We mourn the passing of Michael Kelly: a large talent, a valued colleague, a respected competitor, a beloved friend.

—The Editors

without undue cruelty, were at the gates of Baghdad—it was already too late for the rosy scenario of the cakewalk conservatives. It's possible to think of ways that this sandstorm of steel might have been averted. (The French proposal for delay followed by reproach was contemptibly unserious, but the idea of "coercive inspections"—which, as promoted for months by Jessica Tuchman Mathews, the president of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, would have entailed greatly expanded teams of inspectors, empowered to create "no drive" as well as "no fly" zones and to call in air strikes—was worth trying.) If war was truly unavoidable, it's possible to imagine routes to it that would not have forced us to fight alongside only a single meaningful ally and against the wishes of the people of nearly every country on earth. It's too late for all that now. It's too late for no war; it's too late for a different war; it's too late for an alternative war. And it's too late to accept any outcome that does not involve the fall of Saddam. Those of us who opposed this war or who simply had doubts about it or who thought it had to come but were dismayed by the diplomatic and institutional wreckage its coming has wrought now have no alternative but to hope for a quick and victorious end. But it still matters how the Battle of Iraq is fought. And it still matters, more than ever, what will follow.

—Hendrik Hertzberg

ON THE MAT RUMMY MEETS HIS MATCH



Every March, on the occasion of the N.C.A.A. wrestling championships, serious matmen abandon their desks and their wives for a few days and gather to reminisce about rapid weight loss and sweaty entanglements on the plastic-covered horsehair. At this year's tournament, in Kansas City, the sport's elder statesmen had a particular lanky old grappler on their minds: Don Rumsfeld. Fifty years earlier, as a Princeton undergraduate, Rumsfeld, who is now, of course, the Secretary of Defense, fought a match that is legendary among wrestlers not

so much for what it augured about a career in public service or a style of conducting Pentagon briefings as for what it said about the man as a wrestler.

"It was in 1953, the Eastern Intercollegiate, at Princeton, and the weight class was a hundred and fifty-seven pounds," Phil Harvey, a Class of '55 wrestler for Cornell, recalled. "Everybody assumed that in the finals our Ken Hunt, who had had an undefeated season for Cornell, would meet a kid from Syracuse named Ed Rooney. But in the semis, lo and behold, Don Rumsfeld knocked Rooney out of the tournament. It was a huge upset."

Among his Princeton teammates, Rumsfeld had earned a reputation for quick takedowns. He was an avid practitioner of the fireman's carry. ("You actually picked the man up off the mat, like a fireman carrying somebody out of a house," Harvey said. "And then there was this spinning motion you'd do, where you'd chuck him over your head and bring him down to the mat.") But, amid the tougher competition at the Easterns, Rumsfeld stood out for his superior conditioning and his fierce determination; he was relentless, a bulldog.

Ed Rooney was what is known as a leg wrestler, attempting to tie his opponents up below the waist and then overpower them. At Dillon Gym that day, Rumsfeld, cheered on by his friends from the Cap & Gown eating club, shrewdly kept his distance. Ed Rooney has since died, but his son, Jim, who made the pilgrimage to Kansas City in his stead, recalled, "My father fell behind in that match and was trying to catch up. And basically he spent the last three minutes chasing Don Rumsfeld all over the mat."

Final score: Rumsfeld 6, Rooney 4.

The championship bout took place later that night, with Rumsfeld, in his orange-and-black togs, squaring off against Ken Hunt. "I'd sort of forgotten about it until Rooney's son contacted me," Hunt said the other day, from his home, in North Carolina. "The gym was packed—people were right down on the mats, almost like the kids at Duke basketball games. It was quite a jovial get-together. But Don was quite serious. Even in those days, gosh, he was a very intense guy."

Hunt said that, in contrast to Rooney, who was aggressive from the start, he

liked to "try to get other wrestlers to make a move first, and I'd react, and just count on my speed to win." The strategy seemed to work well against Rumsfeld. "He would go in for this so-called take-down, and see that he couldn't get it, and as he backed off, that's when I would go in and take him down with an ankle pickup," Hunt said. "I took him down



Donald Rumsfeld

three times with that, and that was six points right off the bat." ("Rumsfeld was the kind of wrestler, you knew what he was going to do and he'd do it anyhow," Don Dickason, a Cornell teammate of Hunt's, said.)

Still, Rumsfeld wouldn't give up. "Kenny was an amazingly slick wrestler, just as smooth as can be," Harvey said, "but Rumsfeld was obviously in much better condition."

"I think I was ahead eight—zip or eight—two," Hunt said. "And then I began to run out of gas. I had the feeling that he could taste blood, you know, if he could get me real tired—and I was getting tired."

In the third period (there are three to a match), Rumsfeld began "reversing" Hunt. "He exploited every possible tool," Hunt said. "I think we rolled into the spectators at one point."

"It was just a thing of beauty, where there'd be a move and a countermove and a countermove," Dickason said. "In a way, it didn't matter who got the final points. It was just that both guys were so good."

"I frankly don't remember the end of it," Hunt said. "One of my best friends from high school was at the edge of the mat there, and I remember him saying,

'One more minute!' Don may have gotten one takedown toward the end—gosh, I don't remember. He had sheer will and determination."

Final score: Hunt 9, Rumsfeld 5.

Hunt never wrestled again.

Roger Olesen, who has been called the Boswell of wrestling, has had occasion to think a lot about Rumsfeld recently, because he has just co-written a book about the 1953 wrestling season, called "The Turning Point." (The preface begins, "Wrestling is not, as some contend, like life. Wrestling *is* life—reduced to its essence.")

"They've always built Rumsfeld up as being a great wrestler," Olesen said. "But he wasn't. Rumsfeld, I think, was just a plugger. He would keep coming after you even when the final verdict was no longer in doubt."

—Ben McGrath

JUBILEES A LITTLE OLD MAGAZINE



The anticipation of a fiftieth birthday need not evoke a sense of dread—especially, as the ancient wisdom suggests, when one ponders the alternative. *Playboy* and *The Paris Re-*

view, periodicals whose subscriber lists don't much overlap but which have in common that their respective founding editors, Hugh Hefner and George Plimpton, are still on the masthead (and, in the case of Plimpton—who doesn't spend all day in his pajamas but does live above the store—still in the building), turn fifty this year. *Playboy*, which, its chronological age notwithstanding, is contentedly trapped in a perpetual post-adolescence, will publish its commemorative issue in December, with a long, arousing buildup that begins officially this month, as a twenty-city search for the golden-anniversary Playmate gets under way. There will also be a jazz festival at the Hollywood Bowl in June; an auction at Christie's in New York of art work from the corporate collection ("hundreds of Neimans, Vargases, Warhols, and others," according to Hefner's personal publicist, plus photographs filigreed with "Hef's own critical remarks about how to make the images better"); a three-day autumn Playboy Weekend at a hotel in Las Vegas; an as yet undefined "major event in New York City"; and a more frolicsome than usual New Year's Eve party at the Playboy Mansion in Los Angeles, with a guest list, traditionally limited to four hundred philosopher-sybarites, expanded to seven hundred.

For budgetary as well as aesthetic

reasons, the celebration for *The Paris Review*, a quarterly with a circulation of about ten thousand, will be rather more restrained. The only public festivities will take place next month—a panel discussion, at the New York Public Library, devoted to "little magazines," and an Off Broadway evening of selected readings by actors. Choreographing the latter event will require a heroic distillation of fifty years' worth of fiction, poetry, essays, and interviews—published work culled from a flood of material that, in recent times, has averaged twenty thousand annual submissions. Lots of paper, lots of words.

Several varieties of mystique have attached to *The Paris Review* over the years: its genesis as a clever adventure by a group of shabby-genteel young expatriates (Plimpton, Peter Matthiessen, William Styron, and Donald Hall, among others); its art-for-art's-sake allure for writers, poets, and artists willing to overlook that they were getting paid very little (though they did get invited to parties at the hip-literati crowd's version of a Playboy Mansion—Plimpton's book-stuffed town house, overlooking the East River); and the whole enterprise's genius for staying precariously afloat (largely a function of Plimpton's talent for attracting benefactors willing to assume the title of "publisher"—the first was the son of the Aga Khan, whom Plimpton invited to come aboard as they happened to be fleeing the bulls in Pamplona—and rescue the magazine from its frequent flirtations with insolvency).

The Paris Review's most recent fundraising venture, though it wasn't specifically planned as such, is a fiftieth-anniversary anthology. Unavoidably, it is a big book—seven hundred and sixty-eight pages, as hefty as an almost-full fifth of gin—which, when it was first conceived, failed to stir much enthusiasm from publishers (or, for that matter, from Plimpton himself). Along came Joe Regal, a literary agent, with the suggestion that a *Paris Review* anthology needed a "hook" more enticing than mere longevity. One of the editors, Elizabeth Gaffney, responded with a litany of themes that, with a bit of editing from her colleagues, evolved into a long-winded but inspired title: "The Paris Review Book of Heartbreak,



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The dearly departed usual suspects turn up (Faulkner, Nabokov, Hemingway, Auden, Borges, Cheever, Capote), along with the still ambulatory ones (Mailer, Márquez, Munro, Roth, Paley, Pinter, Naipaul, Updike, le Carré) and the aging upstarts (Erdrich, Franzen, Lethem, Moody, McEwan). There are, inevitably, omissions that won't be forgiven, but the *Paris Review* editors might legitimately claim that they were forced to do their winnowing under adverse working conditions. Plimpton occupies two floors of the town house, two others are rented out, and the magazine's staff—on any given weekday, a half-dozen twenty-something and thirty-something editors, plus two or three interns—squeeze into a ground-floor studio and a basement where they are occasionally joined by the Con Ed meter reader and the boiler repairman.

Compiling the anthology naturally required rereading all the back issues, a task complicated by the fact that inventory management hasn't been the highest institutional priority. At ground level one day recently, a group of editors—Ben Howe, Charles Buice, Brigid Hughes, Oliver Broudy, and Tom Moffett—recalled the experience, several years ago, of removing about nine tons of back issues from a garage on the grounds of Plimpton's mother's place, in Huntington, Long Island. The plan was to deposit the magazines in a safer storage facility, in the Bronx, but a lot of them weren't up to the journey.

"There was a problem with rats," said Howe.

"I'm not so sure they were rats," said Hughes. "I'd say field mice. And it was understandable. Nothing in that garage was newer than the fifties or sixties."

"The rats had tunnelled through them," Howe continued. "Perfectly nice copies of the magazine, except for the

RETIRED GENERAL GEORGE WASHINGTON

Few Americans realize that, in addition to being the first U.S. President, George Washington was also the nation's first retired general. In the years immediately following his Presidency, Washington pioneered the field of military punditry, parlaying his prodigious gift for second-guessing active generals' battle plans into the most lucrative phase of his career. Today's retired generals, believed to number in the tens of thousands, owe Washington more than a debt of thanks; they owe him their salaries, their book deals, and their per diems.

Washington seemed to foreshadow his career as a retired general in his famous Farewell Address to the nation, in 1796. After warning Americans against the dangers of foreign entanglements, he said, "If, however, the nation chooses to get into some foreign entanglements, I will be available to offer expert analysis on those entanglements—as long as the price is right." Returning to Mount Vernon, Washington was so confident that big money offers would come rolling in that he commissioned, at great personal expense, a new set of teeth, which had been handcrafted from the finest Cuban mahogany. "Soon I will be living large," he predicted, in a letter to Thomas Jefferson.

But in his first months of retirement, bookings were few. In a sense, this was Washington's own fault; President John Adams had taken to heart his warning about foreign entanglements and was refusing to open any mail that had the word *le* or *la* on the envelope. Martha Washington, in her diaries from this period, paints a picture of an irritable Washington waiting each day by the mailbox, and cursing as he tore through the inevitable circulars from local fishmongers and blacksmiths.

All of that changed in 1798, when the

so-called XYZ Affair drew the U.S. into a naval standoff with France. Ordering stationery with the letterhead "General George Washington (Ret.)," Washington let every speakers' bureau in the country know that he was available to offer his opinions about the Adams battle plan. Barnstorming through a standing-room-only tour of America's town halls, opera houses, and circus tents, he demonstrated an almost preternatural understanding of the marketplace: he left behind the measured, cautious oratory of his Presidential years and, instead, played the loose cannon, waving a big pointer at a giant map of Europe. "I'm sure President Adams is comfortable with the size of our fleet," Washington would say, in a typical applause line from this tour, "but I say we don't have nearly enough frigates!"

Predictably, success bred imitators, and it was not long before a dozen other retired Revolutionary War generals shadowed Washington on the lecture circuit. In his diary, Washington carped about these rivals: "Some days it seems as if every chump who was in that boat crossing the Delaware with me now has an agent."

And then, in 1799, it was all over, as suddenly as it had begun. Hearing that Washington was about to embark on a thirteen-state college tour, Adams abruptly began to patch things up with France, in a desperate bid to fix his predecessor's wagon. "Father of our country?" Adams wrote to James Madison. "More like son of a bitch!" Embittered, George Washington retired to Mount Vernon, never to bloviate again. He died in December of that year, his face forever memorialized on the dollar bill. For General Washington, Retired, there could be no more fitting tribute.

—Andy Borowitz

hole on each page where a rat had tunnelled through."

"I don't think the mice or the rats were the problem," said Hughes. "The snake was the problem."

"We were shovelling *Paris Reviews* into a U-Haul when we came across the snake," said Howe. "The snake had been living off the rats, and it had a

brood. The snake was so big we had to use a garden hoe to get it out of there."

And was there also, in that vignette, a metaphor allied to the themes of heartbreak, madness, sex, love, betrayal, horror, God, death, dinner, and all that?

"No metaphor," said Howe. "Just rats and a big snake."

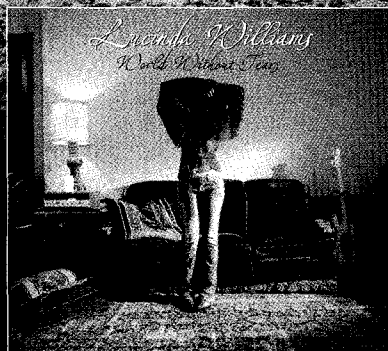
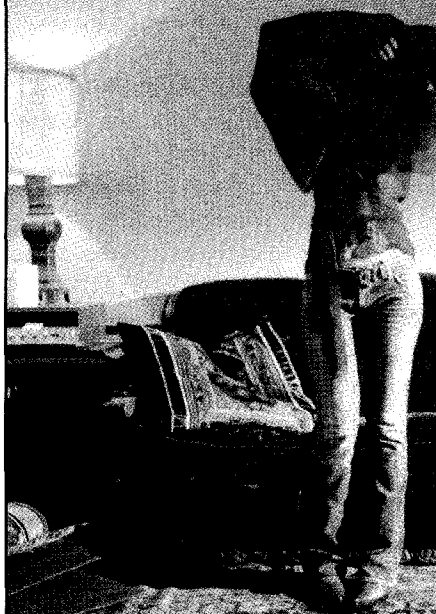
—Mark Singer

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LETTER FROM NORTHERN IRAQ

WARTIME FRIENDSHIPS

Near the front lines, Iraq's feuding opposition groups meet to plot the future.

BY JEFFREY GOLDBERG

The American invasion of Iraq is a happy occasion for the country's five million Kurds, mainly because it foreshadows the removal of Saddam Hussein, who committed acts of genocide against them. But it is also welcomed because it has been accompanied by an invasion of foreign journalists—a rare sight in northern Iraq for more than a decade. For Kurdish leaders, the arrival of the world's press means that they will finally receive attention in proportion to their numbers. It has annoyed the Kurds that the dispute between the Palestinians and the Israelis, a conflict that encompasses roughly eleven million people, is a preoccupation of the media, while the Kurds, who number about twenty-five million (most Kurds live in Turkey and Iran), receive only occasional notice, usually when they are being starved or gassed. Now the Kurds have stumbled on their main chance, and are pleased to be able to share with the world their wish for equality within a democratic Iraq.

One night last week, in Sulaimaniya, the cultural capital of Iraqi Kurdistan, I was speaking with Kaveh Golestan, an Iranian photographer, about the rootedness of the Kurds. Golestan, an elfin, erudite man, was on assignment as a cameraman for the BBC. He had had decades of experience in Kurdistan, and was among the first photographers to enter the city of Halabja after it had been chemically bombarded by Saddam's forces, in 1988. He once described the scene to a reporter, saying, "It was life frozen. Life had stopped, like watching a film and suddenly it hangs on one frame. It was a new kind of death to me."

Golestan was an enthusiastic reader of Kurdish history. He pointed out that the Kurds are believed to be the region's original inhabitants, and were there when the Islamic conquest swept

across Mesopotamia, in the seventh century. The people of Kurdistan are mostly Sunni Muslim, but pre-Islamic religions still survive, syncretistic practices are not uncommon, and, under the surface of intellectual life here, one finds resentment of the early Arab propagators of Islam. In large part, this is because the Kurds—even the Kurdish Islamists—look upon Arabs as oppressors. Last week, I was exploring a series of caves near the Iranian border which had until recently belonged to the radical Muslim group Ansar al-Islam. In one cave, amid the rubble and filthy bedding and rotting food, I found a book of poetry by an important Kurdish Islamist (and a founder of Ansar), Mullah Krekar. The book is called "The Pain of Survival"; a poem called "The Lessons of History" was translated for me. The poem attempts to justify the Islamic invasion of Kurdistan: "The Arabs who came, it is true they were armed, but they worshipped God, and Islam was their purpose." Golestan suggested that we plan a visit to a group of dervishes outside Sulaimaniya, whose approach to Islam was not doctrinaire or extreme, but we postponed the trip because the war was intruding.

The war was present despite a notable absence of American tank columns (the Turks had denied the United States an invasion route from the north). But the Iraqis were in retreat from the line that separated Kurdistan from government-controlled territory; soldiers intent on deserting, as well as the occasional lost Iraqi regular, were wandering into Kurdish territory. I was with a group of *peshmerga*, Kurdish guerrillas, when we came upon two such Iraqis on the front line. They were bedraggled, weak, and terribly thirsty; I've never seen men drink so much water so quickly. The Kurds gave them bread, and directed them to a

peshmerga outpost, where they could surrender. The soldiers soon walked off, filled with bread and with, it seemed to me, relief that they were still alive.

Near Mosul, in northwestern Iraq, American Special Forces soldiers and American bombers fought the retreating Iraqis, and on the outskirts of Kir-

Kurdish officials I spoke to looked ahead with anticipation to what they thought would be a decisive week. They were eager to help liberate Kirkuk, which the Kurds consider their Jerusalem—or, even better, to conquer the city of Tikrit, about a hundred miles from Baghdad, the birthplace of Saddam and a key to the

many of the men attending such meetings have spent much of the past thirty years trying to murder each other. For the sake of Kurdish unity (and to impress their American patrons), the groups have tried to submerge their differences, although few doubt that these differences will burst forth in a post-Saddam Iraq.

The leaders of the two parties met privately for most of the morning at P.U.K. offices in Dukan, then arrived for lunch at the Ashur Hotel. The hotel, an ugly, low-slung building, was designed so that its spartan rooms afforded views of the lake; it was mostly empty before the summit meeting, and the windows were taped in anticipation of attack. The water in the pool was clouded and flecked with garbage. The Kurds arrived in a convoy of forty-some vehicles—late-model S.U.V.s, and pickup trucks carrying anti-aircraft weapons. About twenty of the senior Kurdish leadership emerged from the convoy, surrounded by what appeared to be a limitless number of bodyguards and gunmen. The K.D.P. men were easy to identify, since they wore tightly wrapped red-and-white headdresses. The men of the P.U.K., which originated as an urban alternative to the more tribal K.D.P., were dressed in business suits, and their guards were wearing baggy pants and vests.

The Kurds invited a few of the waiting journalists—including C.J. Chivers, of the *New York Times*, and Jeffrey Fleishman, of the *Los Angeles Times*—to join them for a meal by the pool. The Kurds do not stand on ceremony, and I was placed at the head of the table (it sat twenty-two), next to Massoud Barzani, the leader of the K.D.P., and Jalal Talabani, the chief of the P.U.K. They are particularly dissimilar men. Talabani is rotund and garrulous, a kind of Zorba the Kurd, who believes that there is no inappropriate time to crack jokes or to eat large quantities of barbecued meat. Barzani, who is the son of the legendary Kurdish mountain fighter Mustafa Barzani, is, despite his pedigree, a retiring man, small-boned, almost delicate, and difficult to draw into conversation. But he was nearly ebullient at lunch. He said that he was pleased, over all, with the war's progress. When Fleishman and I mentioned that some commentators were comparing America's experience



Peshmerga fighters on the northern front. Photograph by Marcus Bleasdale.

kuk, which was still in government hands late last week, the Iraqi Army was shelling the line that it had just abandoned. The shelling was especially random and furious around the town of Kifri; on Wednesday, an Iraqi shell killed three Kurds, including a baby. By then, the other front in Kurdistan—between the Kurds and the Ansar al-Islam group—was mostly quiet. An offensive by a combined force of United States Special Forces and *peshmerga* had more or less erased the Ansar enclave around the village of Beyara, near Iran; the *peshmerga* claimed that they had killed about two hundred and fifty of the Ansar men, arrested others, and forced most of the remainder onto the snowy mountain peaks that separate Iraq from Iran. The Americans who advised the six-thousand-man *peshmerga* assault force—and who called in cruise-missile strikes on Ansar targets—made a point of telling the press that the Kurds covered themselves in glory. Their flattery pleased the Kurdish leadership, and, emboldened by their success, the

defeat of the regime. One Kurdish official told me, “The Americans are seeing our value.”

On Wednesday, I visited the resort town of Dukan, which is situated on a deep lake created by the damming of the Lesser Zab River. The lake is ringed by mountains, which were carpeted with spring grass. The leaders of the two main Kurdish parties, the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, or P.U.K., and the Kurdistan Democratic Party, or K.D.P., were meeting there, and it was said that various American generals, Shiite opposition figures, and leaders of the Iraqi National Congress—the umbrella opposition group—would be visiting as well.

The P.U.K. and the K.D.P. are indispensable members of the opposition. They are the only anti-Saddam groups to control territory inside Iraq (this part of northern Iraq has been free of Baghdad's control since 1991), and together they command some seventy thousand soldiers. But the two groups have had hostile relations over a long period, and

in Iraq to its experience in Vietnam, he said, "It's completely different. In Vietnam, you were supporting the dictatorship against the people. Here you're supporting the people against the dictator." He continued, "This is a very good time for us." At one point, he motioned upward, where the faint contrails of B-52 bombers could be seen against the blue sky. "We like to have the presence of Americans here," he said, patting my hand.

Waiters brought dishes that contained, among other things, two roasted turkeys and a lamb, its head still attached. Barzani took a small amount of rice onto his plate; Talabani placed a napkin over his tie, reached over to the turkey, and pulled away a large chunk of meat. Gunmen, many of them in shiny suits and carrying MP-5 submachine guns, surrounded us as we ate.

I asked Barzani, who wore dark glasses against the fierce sun, why the Americans were wary of urging the Kurds in Kirkuk and the Shiites in the south to rise up, as they did in 1991. "It's a mistake," he said. "The people are ready to help. But we don't know everything about their tactics yet."

I looked down the table, to Nawshirwan Mustafa Amin, a writer and one of the founders of the P.U.K. It has been said that Amin is a man who could ignite Kirkuk with a single telephone call.

In 1991, Amin was the P.U.K. official who directed the group's underground network in Sulaimaniya, and, within days of Saddam's retreat from Kuwait, his spies and rebels had seized cities across Kurdistan. I had spoken to him a few days before, and he had said that he was discouraged that the Americans had not openly called for revolt. He went on, "Perhaps it is because they want to control the aftermath of the war without owing any group favors. But this is not a good strategy."

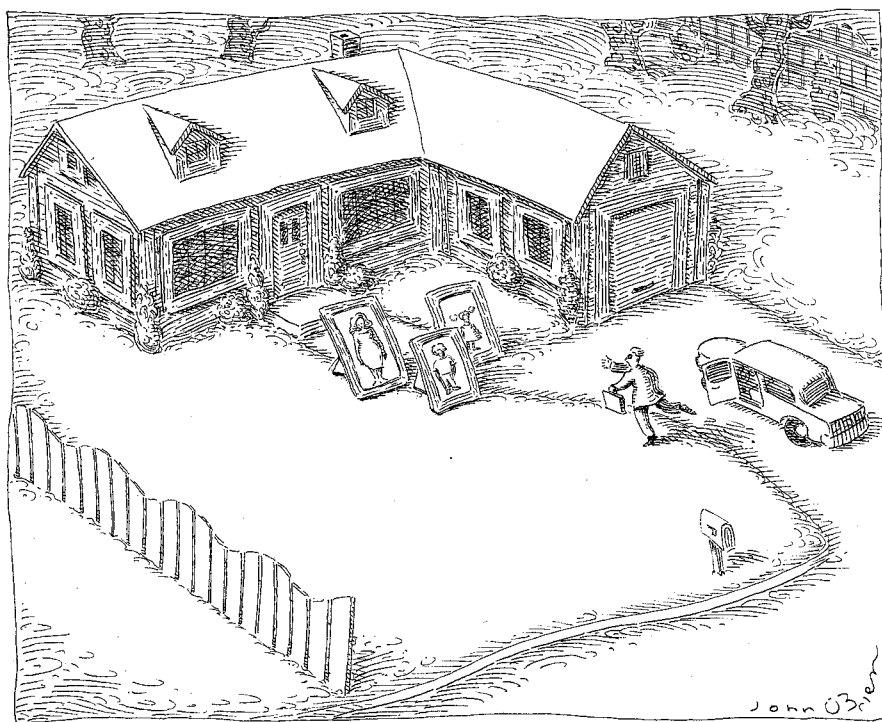
At the Ashur Hotel, I asked Talabani, who had moved on to the kabob course, if specific plans to encourage a revolt would emerge from the day's meetings. "I should tell *you*?" he asked. A waiter approached and, in his eagerness to please, spilled water on the fastidious Barzani. The waiter was mortified, but Barzani dismissed him gently. "I bet he's glad you're not Saddam," I said. Barzani, uncharacteristically talkative, told a story: "You know, one day Saddam had all his ministers in for a meeting, and the Justice Minister made the mistake of looking at his watch. Saddam saw this and he said, 'Do you have someplace you would rather be?' At the end of this meeting, he forced the Justice Minister to sit in the same chair for twenty-four hours."

The lunch broke up, and the two Kurdish leaders moved to a conference room. The reporters waited outside.

Suddenly, a group of angry-looking men—some in American camouflage, others wearing khaki pants and leg holsters, in the Special Forces manner—rushed upstairs. The men, however, were Iraqis, and in the scrum of guards we could see the imperial figure of Ahmad Chalabi, the leader of the Iraqi National Congress. Chalabi, a former banker with a controversial past, is the choice of some in the Pentagon to lead a post-Saddam Iraq. He is not much liked in State Department or C.I.A. circles (which have traditionally been opposed to removing Saddam), and, perhaps more surprisingly, among the Kurdish groups who are constituent members of the I.N.C. Kurdish officials mistrust Chalabi, a Shiite, and hope that his stock will diminish. But the Kurds' strategic decision to subsume their desires to the American war effort leaves open doors—and possibilities.

A Kurdish official, watching the spectacle of Chalabi's entrance, made sure I understood that the I.N.C. leader had not been invited to the lunch. I asked him if he thought Chalabi had a future in the post-Saddam Iraq. "Never count out Ahmad," this official said, wearily. Chalabi has been cryptic about his plans, but earlier in the week he told me, adamantly, that Iraqis, and not Americans, will run postwar Iraq. Of the role that he and the I.N.C. will play in Iraq, he said, "We'll be in Baghdad." (At the end of last week, reports were circulating in Washington that gave Chalabi a role in the interim government to be set up shortly in American-controlled southern Iraq.)

The lobby outside the Ashur Hotel's conference room was now filled with gunslingers, many of them armed with Kalashnikovs and sniper rifles, stone-faced veterans of violent, covert episodes. They were all drinking tea, using dainty spoons to stir in sugar. They soon had more visitors: the men who guard Abdulaziz al-Hakim, an important figure in the Supreme Council for Islamic Revolution in Iraq, or SCIRI. Hakim—he is the brother of Ayatollah Muhammad Bakr al-Hakim, the exiled head of SCIRI—is a leader of the Shiite resistance; he swept in to the hotel wearing the robes of a mullah and an expression of beatific calm. His bodyguards, who



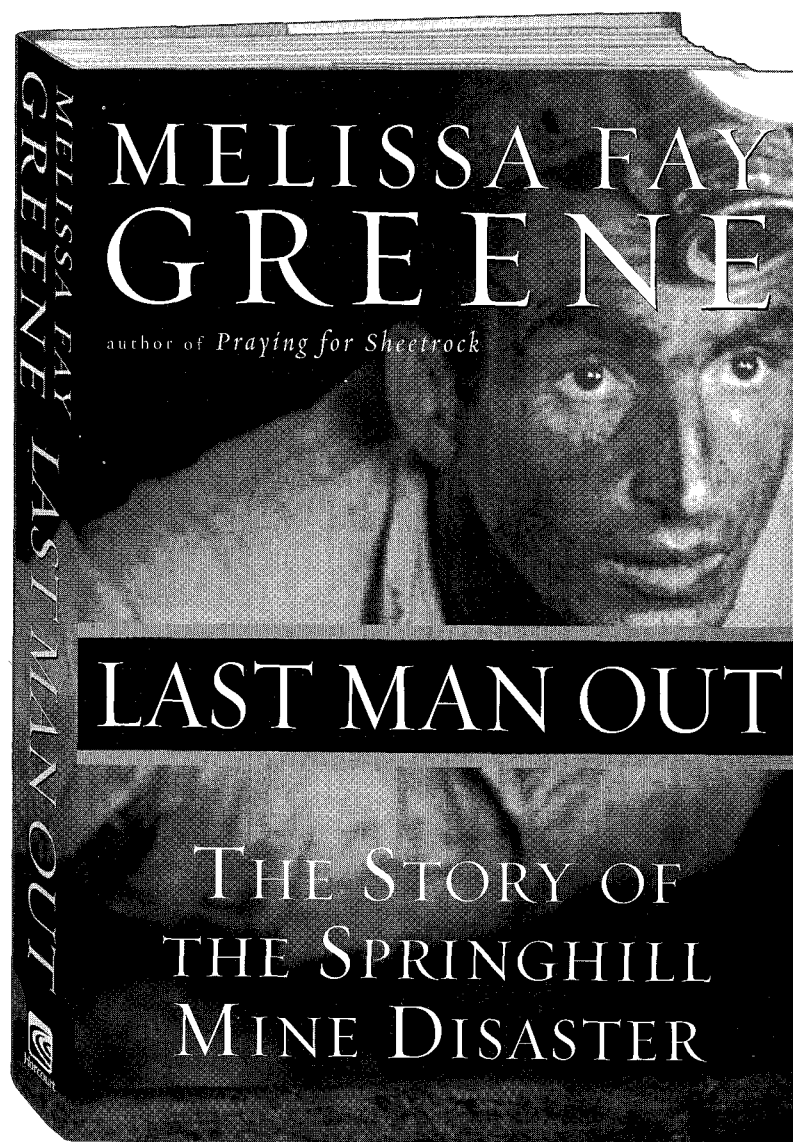
are thought to have been trained by the Iranian Revolutionary Guards, were bearded and tieless. The Kurdish *pesh-merga* eyed them mistrustfully.

While the purpose of the morning meeting was to solidify a united front of Kurdish military forces under American command, I later learned that the afternoon was devoted to persuading these Shiites to join this newly unified opposition, even though it meant a temporary alliance with the Americans. (Although the Shiites are Iraqi, they were opposed to the war, and were resisting the idea of an alliance.) Nawshirwan Mustafa Amin, the Kurdish guerrilla leader, later told me how he had tried to convince the Shiites. "In 1919, we Kurds made a mistake," he said. "The British Army came to Kurdistan, and we fought them until 1931. The Shiites in the south also had a war with the British. At the same time, the Arabs—the Sunni Arabs in the middle of the country—became powerful in the central government. So we told the Shiites, 'Don't make the same mistake twice. Don't leave yourself out. You should participate in the reshaping of the Iraqi state.'" The Shiites told the Kurds that they would consider the message. (Baghdad had apparently received the message as well. A few hours after the meeting, a purported spokesman for Saddam warned Talabani not to side with the Americans, declaring, "I am bound by principle, morality, and the constitution to warn you of the danger of this game.")

The meeting broke up at 5 P.M. Chalabi said nothing to the reporters still at the hotel, but one of his deputies, Madhur Shawkat, said, "The coming days should bring pleasant news from the south." Talabani was more straightforward, although not specific. "You will see a united opposition operating on behalf of the Iraqi people," he said.

One of Talabani's aides, assiduous about keeping the press safe and content, asked me if I needed a ride back to Sulaimaniya. Talabani himself had stepped away for a moment. He stood at the edge of the pool, speaking on his satellite phone. He appeared to be in distress. "No," he said. "No. I told them not to go there." He ended the call, and told us that Kaveh Golestan, a friend of the Kurds, had been killed by a land mine at Kifri. He was fifty-two years old. ♦

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CASUAL

THE REJECTION

BY WOODY ALLEN

When Boris Ivanovich opened the letter and read its contents he and his wife Anna turned pale. It was a rejection of their three-year-old son Mischa by the very best nursery school in Manhattan.

"This can't be," Boris Ivanovich said, stricken.

"No, no—there must be some mistake," his wife concurred. "After all, he's a bright boy, pleasant and outgoing, with good verbal skills and facile with crayons and Mr. Potato Head."

Boris Ivanovich had tuned out and was lost in his own reveries. How could he face his co-workers at Bear Stearns when little Mischa had failed to get into a preschool of reputation? He could hear Siminov's mocking voice: "You don't understand these matters. Connections are important. Money must change hands. You're such a bumpkin, Boris Ivanovich."

"No, no—it isn't that," Boris Ivanovich heard himself protest. "I greased everybody, from the teachers to the window washers, and still the kid couldn't hack it."

"Did he do well at his interview?" Siminov would ask.

"Yes," Boris would reply, "although he had some difficulty stacking blocks—"

"Tentative with blocks," Siminov whined in his contemptuous fashion. "That speaks for serious emotional difficulties. Who'd want an oaf that can't make a castle?"

But why should I even discuss all that with Siminov, Boris Ivanovich thought. Perhaps he won't have heard about it.

The following Monday, however, when Boris Ivanovich went into his office it was clear that everyone knew. There was a dead hare lying on his desk. Siminov came in, his face like a thundercloud. "You understand," Siminov said, "the lad will never be accepted at any decent college. Certainly not in the Ivy League."

"Just because of this, Dmitri Simi-

nov? Nursery school will impact on his higher education?"

"I don't like to mention names," Siminov said, "but many years ago a renowned investment banker failed to get his son into a kindergarten of ample distinction. Apparently there was some scandal about the boy's ability to finger-paint. At any rate, the lad, having been rejected by the school of his parents' choice, was forced to—to—"

"What? Tell me, Dmitri Siminov."

"Let's just say that when he turned five he was forced to attend—a public school."

"Then there is no God," Boris Ivanovich said.

"At eighteen his onetime companions all entered Yale or Stanford," Siminov continued, "but this poor wretch, never having acquired the proper credentials at a preschool of—shall I say—appropriate status, was accepted only at barber college."

"Forced to trim whiskers," Boris Ivanovich cried, picturing poor Mischa in a white uniform, shaving the wealthy.

"Having no substantial background in such matters as decorating cupcakes or the sandbox, the boy was totally unprepared for the cruelties life held," Siminov went on. "In the end, he worked at some menial jobs, finally pilfering from his employer to keep up an alcohol habit. By then he was a hopeless drunkard. Of course, pilfering led to thievery and ended up with the slaughter of his landlady and her dismemberment. At the hanging, the boy attributed it all to failing to get into the correct nursery school."

That night, Boris Ivanovich could not sleep. He envisioned the unattainable Upper East Side preschool, with its cheerful, bright classrooms. He pictured three-year-olds in Bonpoint outfits cutting and pasting and then having some comforting snack—a cup of juice and

perhaps a Goldfish or a Chocolate Graham. If Mischa could be denied this, there was no meaning in life or in all of existence. He imagined his son, a man now, standing before the C.E.O. of a prestigious firm, who was quizzing Mischa on his knowledge of animals and shapes, things he would be expected to have a deep understanding of.

"Why—er," Mischa said, trembling, "that's a triangle—no, no, an octagon. And that's a bunny—I'm sorry, a kangaroo."

"And the words to 'Do You Know the Muffin Man?'" the C.E.O. demanded. "All the vice-presidents here at Smith Barney can sing them."

"To be honest, sir, I never learned the song properly," the young man admitted, while his job application fluttered into the wastebasket.

In the days following the rejection, Anna Ivanovich became listless. She quarrelled with the nanny and accused her of brushing Mischa's teeth sideways rather than up and down. She stopped eating regularly, and wept to her shrink. "I must have transgressed against God's will to bring this on," she wailed. "I must have sinned beyond measure—too many shoes from Prada." She imagined that the Hampton Jitney tried to run her over, and when Armani cancelled her charge account for no apparent reason she took to her bedroom and began having an affair. This was hard to conceal from Boris Ivanovich, since he shared the same bedroom and asked repeatedly who the man next to them was.

When all seemed blackest, a lawyer friend, Shamsky, called Boris Ivanovich and said there was a ray of hope. He suggested they meet at Le Cirque for lunch. Boris Ivanovich arrived in disguise, since the restaurant had refused him admittance when the nursery-school decision came out.

"There is a man, a certain Fyodorovich," Shamsky said, spooning up his portion of crème brûlée. "He can secure a second interview for your offspring and in return all you have to do is keep him secretly informed of any confidential information about certain companies that might cause their stocks to suddenly rise or fall dramatically."

"But that's insider trading," Boris Ivanovich said.

"Only if you're a stickler for federal

law," Shamsky pointed out. "My God, we're talking about admission to an exclusive nursery school. Of course, a donation will help as well. Nothing showy. I know they're looking for someone to pick up the tab for a new annex."

At that moment, one of the waiters recognized Boris Ivanovich behind his false nose and his wig. The staff fell upon him in a fury and dragged him out the door. "So!" the headwaiter said. "Thought you'd fool us. Out! Oh, and as for your son's future, we're always looking for busboys. Au revoir, beanbag."

At home that night, Boris Ivanovich told his wife they would have to sell their home in Amagansett to raise money for a bribe.

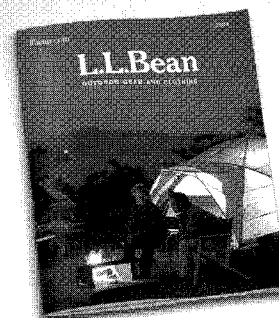
"What? Our dear country house?" Anna cried. "My sisters and I grew up in that house. We had an easement that cut through a neighbor's property to the sea. The easement ran right across the neighbor's kitchen table. I remember walking with my family through bowls of Cheerios to go swimming and play in the ocean."

As fate would have it, on the morning of Mischa's second interview his guppy passed away suddenly. There had been no warning—no previous illness. In fact, the guppy had just had a complete physical and was pronounced in A-1 health. Naturally, the boy was disconsolate. At his interview he would not touch the Lego or the Lite Brite. When the teacher asked him how old he was, he said sharply, "Who wants to know, lard bucket?" He was passed over once again.

Boris Ivanovich and Anna, now destitute, went to live in a shelter for the homeless. There they met many other families whose children had been turned down by elite schools. They sometimes shared food with these people and traded nostalgic stories of private planes and winters at Mar-a-Lago. Boris Ivanovich discovered souls even less fortunate than himself, simple folk who had been turned down by co-op boards for not having sufficient net worth. These people all had a great religious beauty behind their suffering faces.

"I now believe in something," he told his wife one day. "I believe there is meaning in life and that all people, rich and poor, will eventually dwell in the City of God, because Manhattan is definitely getting unlivable." ♦

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FOREVER AMBER

A room built for a king and treasured by an empress haunts two countries.

BY ELIZABETH KOLBERT

On September 17, 1941, the German Army took the town of Pushkin, in the Pulkovo hills south of Leningrad, and immediately proceeded to occupy the Catherine Palace. Originally a gift from Peter the Great to his wife, the palace had been expanded into a Russian version of Versailles—an enormous wedding cake of a castle, with pavilions, follies, and royal

and night, had packed up the museum's holdings and carted them off for safe-keeping. They had managed to remove just about everything of value except the chamber known in Russian as Yantar'naya Komnata, in German as Das Bernsteinzimmer, and in English as the Amber Room.

Amber, in mythology, is the tears shed for Phaëthon after his fall; in scientific

amulets; starting sometime in the sixteenth century, workshops in northern Europe began to invent new uses for it, such as pipes, chess pieces, and inlaid boxes. The Amber Room represents, by several orders of magnitude, the largest such work ever attempted. Three of its walls were covered in panels reaching to a height of thirteen feet, and each panel was covered with a seamless mosaic of amber tiles. Many of these tiles were ornately worked into the shape of flowers and weapons and Biblical figures; others were pieced together to form crests and royal insignias; and still others were underlaid with foil and embossed with tiny, elaborate scenes of sailing ships and country life.

Why the women of Pushkin left the Amber Room behind is not known for



Carvers at the Catherine Palace, near St. Petersburg, reconstructing panels of the lost Amber Room. Photograph by Jens Röttsch.

baths—and, later still, it had been converted by the Soviets into a state museum. Its collection, assembled by the Romanovs, comprised some thirty thousand paintings, sculptures, silver place settings, and French porcelains, but by the time the Nazis arrived the palace was practically empty. During the Germans' advance, the women of Pushkin, working in three shifts, day

terms, it is a partially cross-linked polymer. From an artisan's perspective, it possesses several appealing properties. It can be polished to a high gloss, or cut into thin, translucent sheets, or carved with fine designs. It is soft (not much harder than a fingernail) and light (roughly the density of water). Since Neolithic times, amber has been used to make jewelry and

certain; they probably just didn't have the time to box it up, or the means to transport it, or perhaps the two-hundred-and-fifty-year-old panels seemed to them too fragile to move. The Nazis, for their part, immediately recognized the importance of their find: within hours, the panels had been taken down and were on their way to Germany, from which they never returned.

OSTKREUZ

Of the tens of thousands of art works to disappear during the Second World War, the Amber Room ranks as the most significant, and the most avidly pursued. It has been hunted on both sides of what was the Iron Curtain, from the Baltic Coast to the Thuringian hills, in caves, jails, churches, salt mines, tunnels, bunkers, ice cellars, and shipwrecks. Before the Stasi, as the East German secret police was known, was disbanded, it systematically investigated some hundred and fifty possible hiding places, at one point spending more than a million dollars to excavate a clay pit south of Leipzig. (In the process, the Stasi compiled a dossier on the Amber Room that ran to a hundred and eighty thousand pages.) Although many have dabbled in the search—the Belgian mystery writer Georges Simenon, for example, was a member of an international Amber Room club, founded by a Russian baron living in exile in Liechtenstein—for some it has turned into a life-consuming, even life-depriving, obsession. One of the most dogged of all Amber Room hunters was a West German fruit farmer named Georg Stein. Starting in the mid-nineteen-sixties, Stein pursued the room for more than two decades, deciding—incorrectly—that it had been buried in a mine shaft near Göttingen. His search left his family destitute, and one day he was found naked and dead in a Bavarian forest, his stomach sliced open with a scalpel.

Conservative estimates put the value of the room at a hundred and fifty million dollars. It is clear, however, that this price, which is, in any case, hypothetical, is only a small part of the equation. The Amber Room is desirable because it is beautiful and rare and unlikely. Even when it was new it was exquisitely fragile, and now it is lost.

On a cold, gray morning this past January, I set out for the Catherine Palace to visit what is known as the amber workshop. The goal of the workshop is to replace the missing Amber Room with an exact replica. Depending on how you look at it, this ambition perfectly parallels the effort to find the original or else completely contradicts it.

The director of the project is a forty-seven-year-old stone carver named Boris Igdalov. I met Igdalov in his office, which lies at the back of the workshop, at the

end of a warren of oddly shaped rooms strewn with drawings, diagrams, and little plaster models, all coated in a film of fine, yellowish dust. Every few minutes, Igdalov's phone would ring, and he would utter a few words of reassurance—"Everything will be ready very soon"—and hang up. Igdalov oversees a staff of seventy-five, mostly amber carvers, but also carpenters, architects, accountants, and even lawyers. "This workshop can be considered in a way unique," he told me. "You probably cannot find another like it in the whole world."

Like the old room, the new one is being made out of amber extracted from the loam in Yantar'nyi Poselok, or Amber Village, near the Russian city of Kaliningrad. This amber, the fossilized resin of a now extinct tree, was deposited some thirty million years ago in a layer of sediment known as the Blue Earth which stretches under the Baltic Sea. The knowledge of how to work Baltic amber was once widespread, but by the time the Russian Republic's Council of Ministers decided to rebuild the Amber Room, in 1979, this knowledge had largely been lost, and it took nearly ten years, mainly through trial and error, to recover the most basic techniques. Some two hundred and thirty experiments, for example, were performed just on glues.

Igdalov himself joined the workshop in 1984. "We are living in a very special country, and always we were missing something," he told me. "In eighteen years, every day we were missing something." Before he was promoted to director, Igdalov worked on a series of four mosaics made of onyx, lapis lazuli, and other semiprecious stones. Each of the mosaics represents a different sense; in one, a group of peasants picnic in the midst of ruins; in a second, figures gaze through a telescope. In 1997, the original of one of these mosaics—showing a woman sniffing a rose—suddenly surfaced on the black market in Bremen. It was the first piece of the room ever to be recovered. By then, however, Igdalov had almost completed the replica—a labor of nearly five years.

Igdalov made it clear that the timing of my visit was inopportune. This spring, the new room is finally supposed to be unveiled, and when I arrived the carvers were, in their own painstaking way, racing to finish so that the ribbon-cutting could take place during the festivities planned

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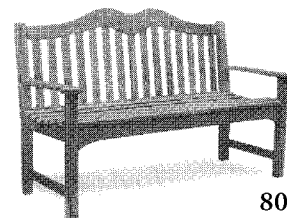
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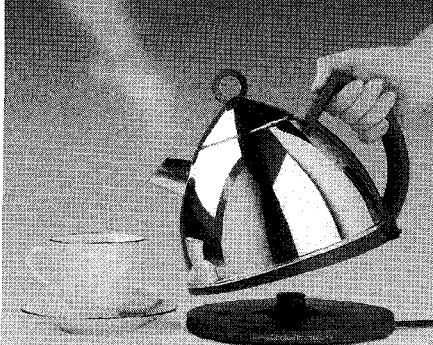
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for the three-hundredth anniversary of St. Petersburg, in May. It was with a marked lack of enthusiasm that Igdalov invited me to observe them. In one part of the workshop, I found two men working on a huge wooden frame that was covered with pieces of amber fitted together jigsaw-puzzle fashion. In another part, I came across a half-dozen carvers sitting hunched over microscopes. Each carver had a set of tools of the sort found in dentists' offices—thin pliers, chisels with very fine points, and tiny drills hanging from cords attached to the walls. American rock blared from the radio.

The Amber Room is being reconstructed from a series of photographs taken in the late nineteen-thirties for a planned restoration that never occurred. For the last three and a half years, the work has been sponsored by a German company, the energy giant Ruhrgas. (Ruhrgas's interest in the project reflects a German obsession with everything having to do with the room, as well as the fact that Russia is the company's primary supplier of natural gas.) One of the carvers—the only one who spoke English—told me that he was making a set of cufflinks engraved with the initials of a Ruhrgas executive. As far as I could tell, everyone else was working on pieces of a single large amber medallion. A man in the center of the room was carving the two-inch-high torso of a Roman soldier, and had reached the point of incising the tunic. He let me look through his microscope—much of the carving is so delicate that it can be done only under magnification—and I could see that the tiny grooves were filled with bits of dust. Another man was carving a set of cannons, a third some bayonets, and a fourth what looked like a bunch of grapes. A plaster model showed that,

when all the pieces were put together, the torso would be in the middle, surrounded by the bristling cannons and bayonets; eventually, I was told, the medallion would decorate the amber frame that I had passed on my way in. Every thirty seconds or so, one of the carvers would lift up the piece he was working on and blow the dust off with a practiced *whoosh*. Then he would put it back under the microscope, resting it on a little velvet cushion. As it happened, this was the fifty-ninth anniversary of the end of the siege of Leningrad, and preparations for some kind of toast seemed to be under way. People kept passing through with supplies, including a tall stack of plastic shot glasses.

Before I left the workshop, I asked Igdalov for his thoughts on the original Amber Room. He spoke for a while about how delicate the room had been, and how difficult to keep up, and about how, over the course of two centuries, many of the amber tiles had fallen off, while others had developed a sugarlike coating. Nevertheless, he told me, he personally knew several people who were still searching for it. This is something they do, he said, "to make life not seem so sad." He sighed. "They are looking for it everywhere, probably on the moon."

The Amber Room was first conceived of in the spring of 1701 by Frederick III, Elector of Brandenburg, who had just had himself crowned Frederick I, King of Prussia. (The coronation ceremony was, in the words of one historian, "so overlaid with tawdry and offensive splendor, that it is always described . . . with unqualified contempt.") On his way back from Königsberg, as Kaliningrad was then known, to Berlin, a journey of some three hundred

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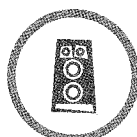
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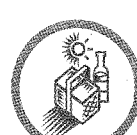
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miles, the new monarch—at least, so the story goes—found himself at loose ends.

The plan Frederick dreamed up in his royal coach seems to have been for an intimate chamber for his own private enjoyment. To work on his Bernstein-Cabinett, he hired craftsmen from all over the Baltic. For ten years they labored, and still they were not quite finished when, in 1711, the room was set up in Berlin's City Palace. Frederick reportedly used it to host ticktacktoe and piquet games for his friends. In 1713, he died.

His son, Frederick William, inherited the project, but, like the rest of the royal family, the new King appears to have had little regard for the late King's ideas. (Frederick I's second wife, Sophia-Charlotte of Hanover, who liked to debate the court philosopher Gottfried Wilhelm von Leibniz, once told a courtier, "That idiot Leibniz, who wants to teach me about the infinitesimally small! Has he therefore forgotten that I am the wife of Frederick I? How can he imagine that I am unacquainted with my own husband?") Frederick William's preoccupation, to the exclusion of virtually everything else, was Prussia's military, and his one weakness was for very tall soldiers, known as *lange Kerls*. In 1716, Peter I of Russia—later, Peter the Great—was travelling through Berlin and expressed admiration for the Cabinet. Frederick William immediately offered it to him as a gift. The following year, Peter returned the favor by sending to Prussia fifty-five of his tallest guardsmen.

The Amber Room was shipped to St. Petersburg in boxes and installed some three decades later when Peter's daughter, Elizabeth I, ascended the throne. It was she who had the room mounted in, and expanded for, the Catherine Palace. The task of redesigning the room fell to her court architect, Bartolommeo Francesco Rastrelli, who is also responsible for most of the palace's other famous interiors, including the Green Pilaster Room and the Golden Enfilade, and who seems to have applied himself to the task with characteristically rococo zeal.

To start with, Rastrelli put up all of the panels from the original Cabinet. These consisted of ten so-called pedestal panels, decorated with Frederick I's initials and Prussian eagles, and twelve much taller panels, decorated with amber frames and carvings. Between these panels, he

mounted twenty-four mirrors of Venetian glass, each topped with a gilded statue of a bare-breasted nymph. Above each nymph, he placed a putto in a languid pose, and behind the putti he installed a series of trompe-l'oeil paintings done to look like amber mosaics. The four mosaics of semiprecious stones, which were done to look like paintings, were the final, sumptuous touch. By the time the work was completed, the intimate Cabinet had been thoroughly transformed. A Frenchman who visited it wrote, "This isn't a cramped boudoir, or a small chamber, but a room of considerable proportions. . . . The eye, unaccustomed to seeing amber in such profusion, is mesmerized and blinded by the wealth and warmth of the tones." Elizabeth's successor, Catherine II—later, Catherine the Great—liked to play cards in the Amber Room, and legend has it that she always won.

On October 30, 1941, twenty-seven crates containing the panels, the mirrors, and the gilded pilasters arrived by truck in Königsberg, where, in a manner of speaking, the Amber Room had originated. The crates were unloaded at the enormous medieval fortress that housed the city's art museum, and the room, or as much of it as would fit, was reassembled in a fourth-floor gallery in the castle's south wing. The opening, in March, 1942, was attended by local Nazi officials and noted in the local press. A pamphlet printed by the museum for visitors' edification explained that, because of the siege of Leningrad, German soldiers had "saved the old Amber Room of Frederick I from the line of fire and brought it to Königsberg for safety."

When the Nazis invaded the Soviet Union, they stole just about every work of art they could get their hands on, including icons from the churches. Still, the Amber Room's provenance placed it in an entirely different category. Built for a Prussian king in Prussian workshops, it was an ideal symbol of the glorious past that the Nazis were trying to create for themselves. Hitler, it is said, intended the



room for the monumental Führermuseum that he was planning to build in Linz, and its disposition until then became a matter of contention between, among others, Hermann Göring, the commander-in-chief of the Luftwaffe, and Joachim von Ribbentrop, the Third Reich's Foreign Minister.

Once in Königsberg, the Amber Room was entrusted to the care of the museum's director, Alfred Rohde, an art historian who had trained in Paris and Munich. Rohde specialized in amber and was widely regarded as a leading expert on the subject. (Some of his monographs, including "Amber, a German Material: Its Artistic Uses from the Middle Ages to the Eighteenth Century," are still considered authoritative.) Although Rohde was not himself a Nazi Party member, he appears to have enjoyed good relations with the area's regional commander, Erich Koch, and, weeks before the Germans had even reached Pushkin, he urged Koch to try to lay hold of the room. After the war, Rohde's secretary reported that the museum director used to arrive at work at five o'clock in the morning. He would make the rounds of all the galleries in the castle, stopping last in Gallery 37, where the Amber Room was on display. "Often, he sat in the middle of the room and just gazed at the amber walls," she said.

The Amber Room was exhibited in the Königsberg castle for twenty months, during which time the German advance was halted. By late 1943, the Nazis' position had weakened to such an extent that Rohde began to worry about the room's safety. He had it disassembled and boxed once again. On the night of August 26, 1944, British planes dropped four hundred and sixty tons of bombs on Königsberg; three nights later, they returned to drop another four hundred and ninety-two tons. The raids laid waste much of the city, including the castle. But, in a letter dated the following month, Rohde assured a colleague in Berlin that, with the exception of six of the pedestal panels, the Amber Room had survived the bombings intact.

That winter, the Germans' eastern defenses collapsed. When it became clear that Königsberg would soon be occupied, Rohde's two children were evacuated. He and his wife presumably could have gone, too, but they chose to stay be-

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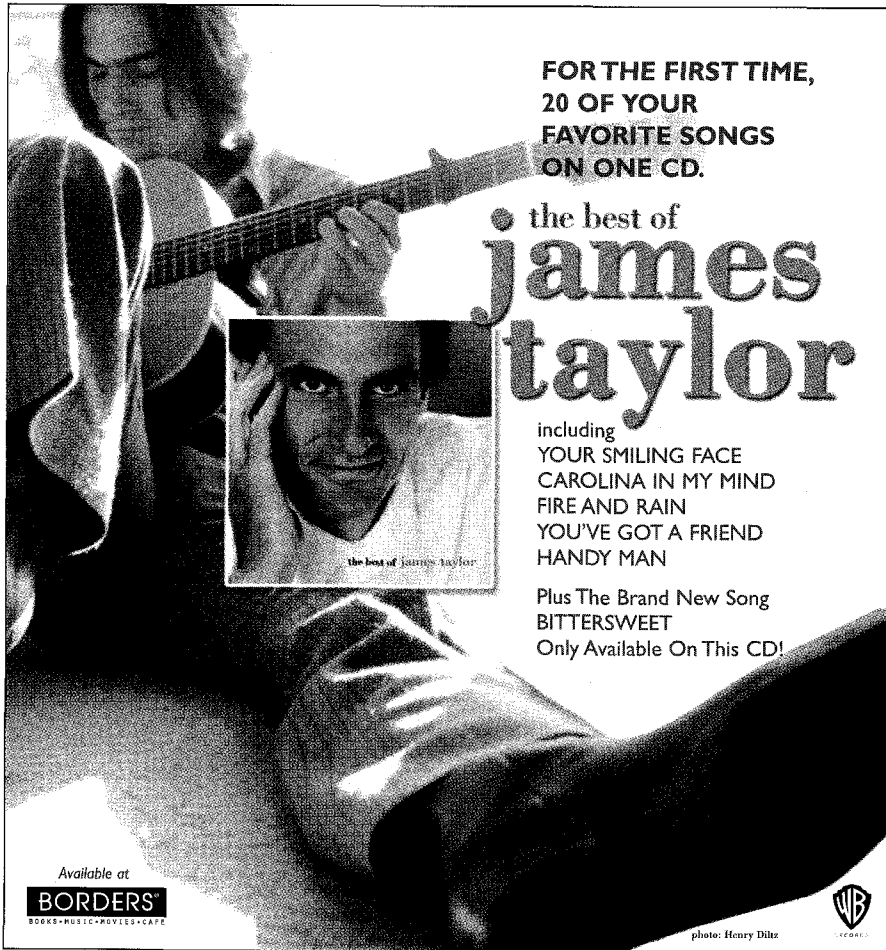
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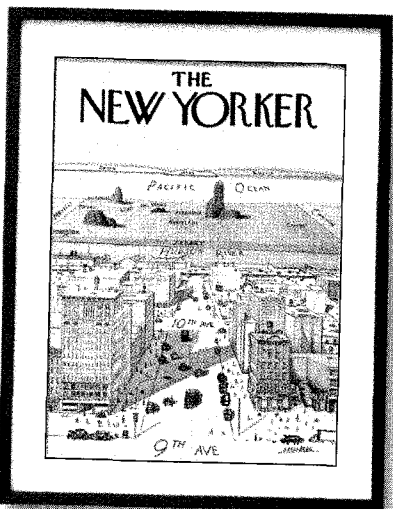
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hind. They lived through the capture of the city by the Soviets, in April of 1945, and during the next few months Rohde was interrogated several times by Soviet officials. He was evasive, and at one point was discovered burning a pile of papers. By the end of December, both of the Rohdes were dead. Officially, their deaths were attributed to typhus; however, rumors began to circulate that they had been poisoned. Suspicious, the Soviets went to look for Rohde's body, which they could not find, and also for the doctor who had signed his death certificate, whom they could not locate.

The twenty-seven crates in which the Amber Room had arrived in Königsberg had together weighed several tons. Moving them had required a team of men and a small convoy of trucks. Yet there is no record of how the room left the city, if, indeed, it ever did. From Königsberg, theories about the room's fate branch out in all directions. Some point west, toward central Germany—according to one particularly far-fetched account, the room was buried in Berlin's Botanical Gardens—some north to the Baltic Sea, others south to Poland, and a few even east, toward Lithuania.

With Rohde's death, the most obvious source of information became his friend Erich Koch. Like Rohde, Koch was an art lover. He was also, by his own admission, "a brutal dog." A formal railway clerk, Koch had joined the Nazi Party early—his membership card was No. 90—and, in 1933, was appointed by Hitler as governor of East Prussia. Later, his jurisdiction was expanded to include large swaths of Poland, and, in 1942, Koch became Reichskommissar of the Ukraine.

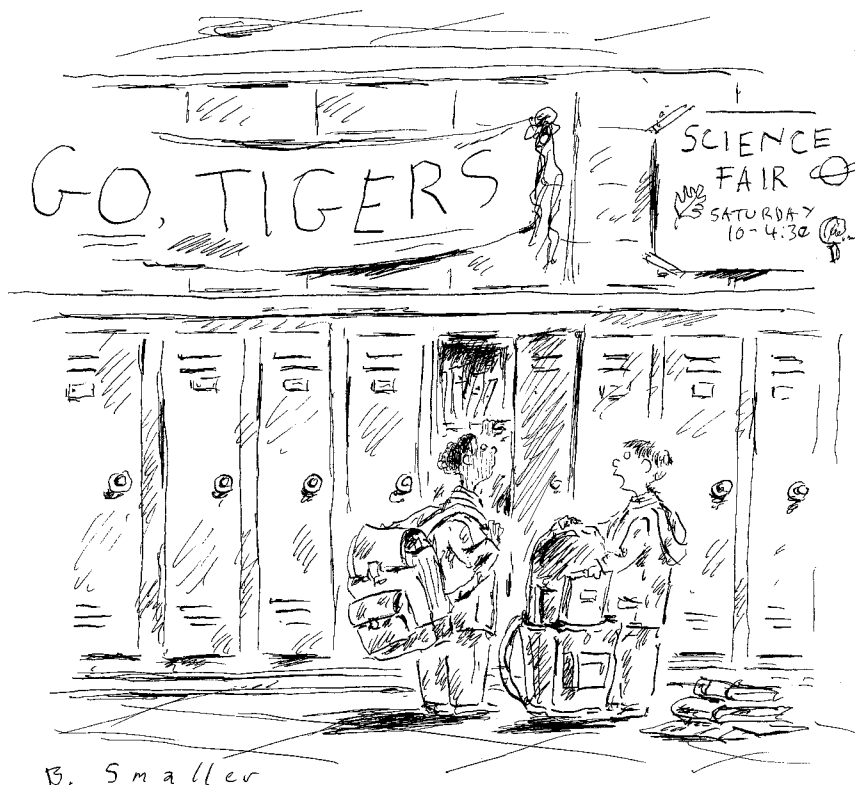
In Koch's view, which was not universally endorsed by the Nazi command, but was, importantly, shared by Hitler, the Ukrainians were *primitive beings*—half monkeys—who had to be "handled with the whip, like the Negroes." (Koch once declared, "If I find a Ukrainian who is worthy of sitting at the same table with me, I must have him shot.") Under Koch's command, all schools above the fourth grade were closed, the city of Kiev was reduced to a state of near-starvation, and more than a million Ukrainians were sent to work—and often to perish—as slave laborers. When the Soviets finally drove the Germans out of the Ukraine, Koch

retreated to Königsberg; after the Germans surrendered East Prussia, he fled westward once again, this time in his private airplane.

In 1949, British agents finally tracked Koch down in a small town near Hamburg, where he had been working, under an assumed name, as a farmhand. The British turned Koch over to the Poles for prosecution, and in 1959 he was convicted by a district court in Warsaw. The original sentence was death, but it was commuted to life in prison. At the time, it was widely believed that the reason the Poles had decided to spare Koch was to find out what he knew about the Amber Room.

In prison, Koch did indeed begin to talk. Early on, he let it be known that the crates containing the room had been loaded onto a ship called the *Wilhelm Gustloff*, which had been sunk not far from Königsberg by Soviet torpedoes. (Of the estimated ten thousand people on board, most of them German civilians being evacuated from the city, more than nine thousand had drowned.) Koch's story sent at least a half-dozen diving teams to the bottom of the Baltic to search the *Gustloff's* wreckage.

Subsequently, Koch asserted that the Amber Room had been loaded onto a different ship, the *Emden*, and also, contradictorily, that it had, by his own orders, been trucked to Ponarth, a Königsberg suburb. On another occasion, he was reported to have told a Polish newspaper, "In the place my art collection can be found, you'll also find the Amber Room." During the war, Koch had been a particularly avid looter; records found in the Ukraine show that among the many art works that he appropriated for the Nazis were three thousand and seventy-seven oil paintings, seven hundred and sixty-six watercolors, and three hundred pieces of faïence. According to German records, part of what Koch considered his own art collection reached Weimar in January, 1945, and was then shipped out again—where, no one knows. (The works have never been found.) Only later was it revealed that Koch's remarks had been mistranslated from Polish into German, and that what he had really said was "If anyone can tell me where my collection went, then I'll know where the Amber Room is." But by that point an "It's a Mad, Mad, Mad, Mad World" rush to Weimar had already ensued.



"I never appreciated nap time when I had it."

At the time of his sentencing, Koch was supposed to have been gravely ill, yet somehow he managed to live for another twenty-seven years. In 1986, shortly before he did die, at the age of ninety, he made an offer to reveal the room's *real* hiding place in return for his freedom. By then, the Polish authorities, understandably, had had enough.

Today, practically everyone who could have had direct knowledge of the Amber Room in the final months of the war is dead; still, a lively traffic continues in rumors, secondhand stories, and purported deathbed confessions. In 1994, a sketch made by a former prisoner and the notes of a U.S. Army officer led to reports that the room had been buried at Buchenwald. In 1998, the German radio station Norddeutschen Rundfunk, following a tip from an eighty-year-old resident of Preila, Lithuania, sponsored an expedition to search a shallow lagoon there. In 2000, two teams, one from Germany and the other from the Czech Republic, excavated a defunct silver mine spanning the border; both teams were acting on information allegedly provided by former S.S. men. Such is the fascination with the

room, particularly in Germany, that there is almost no clue too trivial to be pursued. A journalist I know who worked for the weekly *Der Spiegel* was once sent to hunt for the room in a Russian riverbed on the basis of information provided by the former boyfriend of his cleaning woman.

Perhaps the world's authority on the search for the Amber Room is an amateur historian named Heinz Schön. Schön, who is seventy-six, is a slight man with white hair, a gray mustache, and a fastidious manner. "I'm not a treasure hunter" was one of the first things he told me when I went to visit him a few months ago at his home in Bad Salzuflen, not far from Hanover.

Schön became interested in the Amber Room in connection with the *Gustloff* sinking, of which he is a survivor. (A civilian on the ship's staff, he saved himself by clinging to a raft.) "The search for the Amber Room is for me a sort of criminal case," he said. "One suspects something is somewhere, and, when one can't find it, exactly like in a crime story there's only rest when one has found it, and not simply closed the book and said the case

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remains unsolved." In his spare time, he began collecting documents and newspaper clippings, and conducting his own investigation. Whatever he found, he assembled in bright-yellow binders. He is now up to binder No. 95.

Over the years, Schön has come to believe that the key to locating the Amber Room lies in understanding the psyche of Alfred Rohde. "Amber was for Rohde the most important thing in life," Schön told me. "The Amber Room was, naturally, the crown, the only treasure in the world that had meaning for him." Rohde's decision to stay in Königsberg after his children were evacuated proves, according to Schön, that the room never left the city. Schön also stresses the fact that, as an art historian, Rohde had a professional interest in the city's ancient fortifications. The Königsberg castle, which was begun in 1255, sat atop a network of vaulted cellars that extended at least three stories deep and covered an area the size of two football fields.

After the war, the Soviets decided to erase almost all traces of Königsberg, and to build an entirely new city, named after the revolutionary hero Mikhail Ivanovich Kalinin. They bulldozed the castle ruins and erected a twenty-two-story, poured-concrete office tower on top of them. The tower, which was supposed to serve as government offices, was deemed structurally unsound shortly before it was completed. "The Monster," as Kaliningrad residents call it, has never been occupied. Schön maintains that the building's architectural problems are a result of ignorance: the Soviets never knew the full extent of the castle's underground vaults, which explains why they never found the Amber Room. He advocates tearing the building down so that a thorough search of the site can be made. "Naturally, there are people who say, 'That Schön is crazy,'" he told me.

Since the early nineties, when visas to the former Soviet Union became easier to obtain, Schön has been to visit Kaliningrad several times. (The city, which is seven hundred and fifty miles west of Moscow, is now considered part of Russia, although it is separated from the rest of the country by Lithuania.) He has also been to St. Petersburg, and toward the end of my visit he pulled out one of his

yellow binders, filled with pictures he had taken at the amber workshop. Schön spoke enthusiastically about the reconstruction; however, he was quick to point out its limitations. He was reluctant even to refer to the new Amber Room as a copy, since, as he put it, a copy can be made only from an original, which in this case is exactly what's missing. "When people see the new Amber Room, they will say, 'Man, that's an amazing thing. And the original?' The question will always arise: Where is the original?"

The Catherine Palace is laid out in a straight line, with a façade, designed by Rastrelli, that stretches on for nearly a fifth of a mile. The Amber Room is in the northern part of the palace, and to get to it you must first put on a pair of booties and climb a set of stairs covered with crimson carpeting. Then you turn down a hall of identical golden doorways that seem to go on and on, like a trick done with mirrors.

In preparation for its grand reopening, the Amber Room has been closed to visitors since September. The first time I got in to see it was a day when the palace was shut, and nearly deserted. It was said of the original Amber Room that it seemed to glow from within; standing in the new room, in the quiet, I had the same strange sensation.

One of the paradoxes of the Amber Room is that its fabled amber color is not actually the color of amber. In its natural state, most Baltic amber is a dull, unappealing shade of tan. (An expert I spoke to likened its hue to that of milky tea.)

Frederick's craftsmen improved on nature by using techniques that had been developed over hundreds of years. Either they heated the amber to make it translucent or they dyed it any one of more than a dozen shades, from a lemony yellow to a

deep red. To reproduce the room's warm glow, the amber workshop first had to recover—or, perhaps more accurately, reinvent—these lost arts. (Its technique of amber dyeing is now considered a Russian trade secret, and all I was able to learn about the process was that it involved organic chemicals.)

The next challenge was in some ways even trickier. In all, eighty-six photographs



were taken of the Amber Room in the nineteen-thirties, in preparation for the restoration that never took place. These images are remarkably detailed—enlarged many times, they have been made to yield the irregular shape of each individual tile—but they are in black-and-white.

To get around this problem, the amber workshop turned to a bag of tiles that had fallen off the panels before the war and, mostly by chance, been preserved. Each of these tiles was photographed in black-and-white, and the results were used to construct a reverse color scale for interpreting the original photographs. What were described to me as “heated discussions” over the color scale lasted more than nine years, and, in expert circles, the question of whether it has been applied properly is still being debated. Alexander Shadrinsky, a chemist from St. Petersburg who now lives in New York and teaches at Long Island University, told me that, in his opinion, many of the tiles had been dyed too red: “It is disturbing for every person of a certain level of aesthetic understanding.” Alexander Zhuravlev, the project’s former director, said, “It is a pity that the coloring of the panels in the Amber Room was conducted unsystematically.”

Given the hundreds of people who have worked on the new room, a certain amount of rivalry and ill will was perhaps inevitable. (Zhuravlev, who left the project eight years ago to start his own workshop, told me that the greatest obstacle to its success had been “the relentless ambition of certain individuals, as well as the occasional ignorance and incompetence of some others.”) On a larger scale, the project reflects the progress in German-Russian relations and, at the same time, lingering bitterness and resentments. More than once, I was told that the new room had shown Russian craftsmen to be not just as good as, but superior to, their German counterparts. “I even think our version improves on the original,” one of the workshop’s foremen, Alexander Krylov, said. In a gesture whose aggressiveness was hard to overlook, there was talk of unveiling the new room on May 9th, the very day that the Russians celebrate their victory over the Germans in the Second World War.

Ivan Sautov runs the Catherine Palace and negotiated the deal by which Ruhrgas became the exclusive sponsor of the reconstruction project. When I went

to see him, he gave me a long, upbeat lecture on German-Russian friendship, which began with the fact that Catherine the Great had been born a Prussian princess and concluded with a story about how his eighty-three-year-old mother, after surviving the siege of Leningrad, used to invite German P.O.W.s over to the house for dinner. Then he related to me his personal theory of the Amber Room. Sautov proposed—without, as far as I could tell, any supporting evidence—that when Rohde had the original Amber Room packed up, he divided it into two sections. The first consisted of those parts of the room that had been crafted in Prussia and the second of those parts that had been added later, in Russia. The first section, he told me, was still hidden somewhere, but Rohde had allowed the second section to be destroyed.

At the time of my visit, in late January, the new Amber Room was nearly complete. The half-naked nymphs and the putti and the trompe-l’oeil paintings were in place, as were all but two of the twenty-two panels. I stood in the middle of the room for a while, and then moved up for a closer look.

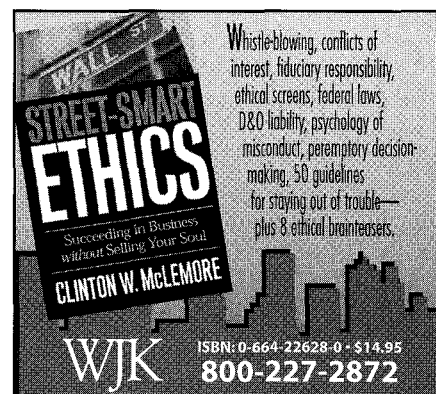
If the Amber Room is in some ways less than a great work of art, it is also more than one. From its conception, it was an idea carried too far, an idle pleasure pursued to the point of mania, and even now, three hundred years later, its attraction is almost indistinguishable from its excessiveness. The panels are full of surprises—roses, garlands, castles, cannons—that reveal themselves only gradually. Everywhere, there are diminutive heads, some in profile, some staring back at you. I noticed a tiny windmill with blades turning in a perpetual breeze, and a group of amber knights resting by a tiny amber stream. When I got close enough, I could see their little amber faces, sporting little amber beards. On one of the panels, I happened to recognize a date, “Ano 1709,” spelled out using only the amber’s natural veins. The cumulative effect was at once exhilarating and slightly frightening. I couldn’t help thinking of the many people who had searched so long—and so fruitlessly—for the room. Most of them had never had an opportunity to enter it or even, as I had, its replica. It was to them purely a romantic fiction, an impossible notion of splendor that once existed and might still be found again. ♦



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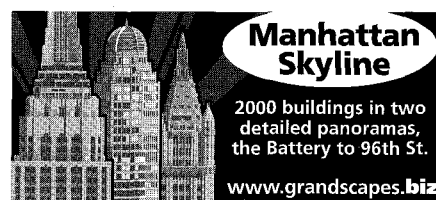


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WAR WOUNDS

Bombs fall and the lights go out.

BY JON LEE ANDERSON

When the bombing of Baghdad began, Karim, who has a small barbershop on a nameless side street near the city's main bazaar, closed his business, but a few days into the second week of the war he reopened, and I asked the Ministry of Information for permission to visit him. (Restrictions on the activities of journalists had become so draconian by then that simply going to the barber without a minder looked suspicious.) Karim is a perfectionist. A shave and a trim can take forty minutes, which is very relaxing. He was finishing up with two clients—older men who had had their hair and mustaches dyed—when I arrived at the shop with Sabah, my driver. Iraqi men are very careful about their personal appearance. Mustaches are *de rigueur*, but other facial hair is shaved or plucked. One of Karim's clients was standing near the door, letting the thick black paste in his mustache and hair dry; the other one, an Army officer, to judge from his uniform, was in the barber's chair. He said, "Hello, hello"—an Anglicism that Iraqis employ as an all-purpose salutation. He was wearing a holster that held a gold-plated revolver. "Iraq just needs peace. Only peace," he said in English when he got up. He said goodbye to us and left with his friend. Outside, people were looking up at the sky. You could hear the slow-rushing roar of a B-52 overhead. A few moments later, there were a couple of loud explosions, and the rattletrap building across the street shook. The plastic covering on its windows flapped violently. Karim paid no attention.

We had passed the Al Safeer Hotel, on Abu Nawas Street, where I used to stay, as we drove to Karim's, and I noticed that a cinder-block wall had been put up where the hotel's large ground-floor windows had been. The steel security shutters on pretty much all the businesses on Sadoun Street, which

runs parallel to Abu Nawas, were locked tight, and windows were criss-crossed with adhesive tape. The Air Defense Ministry, a few blocks farther on, was flattened. Two great holes had been punched into it by cruise missiles in the first few days of the war, and now it was just a jumble of gray concrete slabs. A column or two and an archway still stood, leaning at odd angles. The great statue of Saddam, in front, was untouched.

It was difficult to get your bearings in the new landscape. Journalists weren't permitted to visit recently bombed sites except in escorted groups—and not all the sites, even then—and every day our drivers and minders had to figure out ways to move around without letting us see what had happened during the previous night's attacks. Two reporters, an Australian and a South African, who went on their own to inspect the damage to the Information Ministry after a second strike against it were expelled from the country. From then on, drivers stopped using the Sinak bridge to cross the Tigris, since the road leading from it runs past the ministry. Often, they would try to persuade us just to stay in the hotel. Lunch outings, which had once given the impression of freedom, were more or less impossible to arrange. Only two sit-down restaurants in Baghdad were still open for business, anyway, and, to avoid problems, Sabah usually got takeout meals from one or the other.

Sabah stayed in whatever hotel I was staying in, booking a room at discounted Iraqi-only rates. One of his sons would come by every day to say how the family was doing, and his wife, whom he calls "Madam Sabah," sent us freshly made rice tortillas and thermoses full of Turkish coffee. Every two or three days, he went home for a visit. I urged him to go more often, but he

said that there were too many people there and it was too noisy. It made him agitated. In addition to his wife and three youngest children, the children of his four brothers and their wives, and his elderly mother—all of whom lived in two adjoining houses—one of his sisters and her four children were staying with him. They lived near the Al Douira oil refinery, in a neighborhood where there had been a lot of bombing. Then some pieces of a missile landed in the street near the home of two of Sabah's sons, who lived together a block away. One of the sons is married and has two young children. The next day, they moved in with the rest of the family. By my calculation, there were thirty-three people in two houses, with five bedrooms between them.

As the bombing went on, people developed minor health complaints—headaches and backaches. Most also suffered a loss of appetite. Cigarette smokers were smoking more than usual. An Information Ministry official named Walid appeared one day wearing a neck brace and wincing a lot. No one seemed to be getting much more than three or four hours of sleep a night. Sami, the government minder I share with another journalist, Paul McGeough, of the *Sydney Morning Herald*, is a diabetic, and one evening, when we were out chasing a reported bombing that involved dead civilians, he went into a state of shock and was temporarily incapable of speaking or understanding what anyone said to him. The next morning, I took Sami to a doctor, who said he could fall into a coma if it were to happen again. His insulin dosage needed to be checked, but his regular doctor had closed his clinic and left Baghdad for the duration of the war. Sami went to another doctor, who suggested he alter the dosage and get more sleep. He was feeling a little better the next day, he

said to me, but he still couldn't sleep. He shrugged. There was nothing he could do about it.

The warheads that crashed into the upper floors of the Information Ministry, which was also the headquarters of the foreign press center, made a mess of the satellite dishes and antennas

After the war began, he started wearing a beret and a military uniform with a holstered revolver at his waist. He speaks English with a British accent and takes great delight in berating the Anglo-American forces as "mercenaries" and "war criminals," gloating over battlefield victories claimed by the "heroic Iraqi resistance." On March 30th, Sahaf in-

orated in faux-Mesopotamian style, with pieces of old kilims in frames on the walls. The carpets and bedspreads have a vaguely Sumerian pattern, and the balconies, with their latticed wooden shutters, are modelled on the hanging balconies of old Baghdad. Our balcony has a sweeping view of the Tigris River, which runs immediately below it, and of



Yarmuk Hospital in Baghdad, where Iraqis wounded during the attack on the airport were taken. Photograph by Sungsu Cho.

on the roof, blew out most of the windows, and shredded much of the building's interior. It was destruction that had been foretold. For several days, journalists had been warned by their organizations back home to stay away from the place because it was on the Pentagon's target list. When a reporter asked the Information Minister, Muhammad Said Al Sahaf, how the ministry would continue to function, he replied, bluntly, "You are the ministry of information." The next day, it was announced that the Palestine Hotel, where most journalists lived and worked, would officially become the press center.

Muhammad Said Al Sahaf is a short, corpulent man with large features and carefully cut hair that is dyed jet-black.

formed us that Iraq's government had issued a directive to its forces to bury "all killed American and British in the field, according to the laws of their religions. We cannot have their bodies lying around in the open or in refrigerators."

After the Palestine was made the press center, we were told that we would be permitted to stay in the Sheraton, next door, which had previously been out of bounds. Paul McGeough and I took a spacious two-room suite on the twelfth floor of the Sheraton, a seventeen-story building constructed of brown concrete and tinted glass sometime in the eighties, with a central atrium and bulbous exposed glass elevators. The hotel lost its franchise and most of its customers long ago, but it has a certain charm. It is dec-

the Republican Palace complex, with its parklands and bombed-out palaces. On the first night we were there, warplanes hit the complex at least three times and, within minutes, got another two targets in the city center, only six or seven blocks away from the hotel. We saw fireballs, and black smoke rising up into the sky. The Sheraton rocked back and forth, as if there had been a mild earthquake, and the windows buckled but didn't break.

In the morning, I stood on the balcony and looked down at the river, which loops gradually to the southwest and is dotted here and there with islets of green bulrushes. Debris was strewn across the flat roof around the dome of the main Republican Palace. I could make out the Al Rashid Hotel, Saddam's partially built



"I should ask, before we begin, whether you're looking to repair your existing marriage or replace it?"

mosques, the spindly, saucer-topped telecommunications tower, and the pyramid-shaped mansion that belonged to Saddam's late brother-in-law Adnan, next to a military marching field spanned by an arch formed by giant sabres, each in the grip of a huge bronze hand and forearm. I counted thirteen oil fires pouring huge clouds of smoke into the city from different points south and west; there must have been at least that many behind me, on the other side of the building. As I watched, there was a roar, a terrific bang, and an explosion in the palace complex, perhaps half a mile in front of me. Flames shot up, followed by a huge column of smoke.

I heard a rattling sound and looked down. A man in a donkey cart carrying jerricans was clattering along Abu Nawas Street.

A group of tribal sheikhs and clan elders came through Baghdad to express their loyalty to Saddam Hussein. Dozens of them, dressed in traditional robes and wearing head scarves held down with black cords, came and went in

minibuses and milled around outside the old Baghdad Hotel, which is eight or ten blocks from the Palestine and the Sheraton. It was said that the sheikhs were receiving money and weapons in return for rallying their people to fight against the Americans and the British. After several tries, I managed to talk to some of them. Salman Amoud Jumeil and Khalil Salah Al-Mushaqy, two men in their forties, told me they were from Diyala, a rural area near the border with Iran. Sheikh Jumeil said that he represented about a thousand people, mostly farmers. "It is a duty," he said. "The duty of all the sheikhs is to defend their lands." Jumeil added, with a little prompting, "We are here to support the leadership. We say no to the aggression against our country."

I asked Jumeil whom he hoped to see in Baghdad. Would he meet with Saddam Hussein? He and Sheikh Mushaqy exchanged glances. "Maybe we will meet with someone important in the government to explain that we're ready to fight," Jumeil said. More sheikhs had wandered over to listen, and they formed a circle around us. One of them, a regal-

looking dark-skinned man in a fine green robe and a white head scarf, interrupted. "We are here to renew our promise to fight for the government," he said. And he added, "If the Americans come as guests, we welcome them. But if they come to occupy our country we will kill them. You have seen what is happening, because you are here living with us." He motioned with his head, as if to indicate the bombed buildings, just out of sight, all over Baghdad. "No one has done anything to them, but the Americans have come here. Why?" He looked genuinely mystified.

An old sheikh who wore a brown manteau over a dish-dash robe with gold-embroidered edging asked me if I was from America. I said yes, and he repeated the question about America's motives. The men craned to watch my face, and I said that, in my opinion, the September 11th attacks—all the sheikhs nodded when I said "September 11th," not waiting for a translation—had transformed the security considerations of the United States, and it seemed that President Bush, and other Western leaders, had decided that Saddam Hussein's regime was hostile, and that Iraq was a potentially dangerous state, and that for this reason Saddam had to go. The old sheikh demurred. "I think America comes just for the oil," he said, "and to protect Israel."

I asked Sheikh Mushaqy if he and the other sheikhs would be given weapons before they returned home, to help them in their fight. "We have weapons," he replied. "We don't expect to be given guns, but yes, directives on what to do." He said that he thought the Americans would lose the war, because right was not on their side.

A bare-headed man in his twenties sidled up and began speaking forcefully. He said that his name was Mujabel Sahel Awad Al Halaj and that he was the son of one of the sheikhs, from the village of Al Hawijah, near Kirkuk. "The people of Al Hawijah support Saddam Hussein, and we are ready to defend great Iraq," he said loudly. "Bush and Blair and Sharon are looking first after the safety of Israel, because our great leader Saddam Hussein always threatens Israel, and secondly they are looking for oil. We elected President Saddam Hussein and we love him and we are ready to do anything for him."

When Al Halaj finished his speech, I asked him if there was fighting in Al Hawijah. He gestured dismissively. "Only the Kurds are threatening, but we don't worry about them." Al Halaj was eager to kill American and British soldiers. "If we catch any American soldiers, we will cut them"—he made a slicing motion—"and kill them like sheep."

"You won't take prisoners?"

"No," Al Halaj shouted. He was getting worked up. "We'll just cut them"—he made the slicing motion again—"and throw them to the dogs."

Two rough-looking men in civilian clothes came up then and asked what we were doing. They didn't seem friendly, and the sheikhs moved away. Sami told me that we should leave. At the hotel entrance, several sheikhs were getting into minibuses. They were on their way, I assumed, to an audience with someone in authority.

On the last day of March, I went to see Dr. Osama Saleh, an orthopedic surgeon and the head of medical services at the Al Kindi Hospital. In the nineteen-eighties, Dr. Saleh studied in Cuba, where he was a pupil of Cuba's foremost orthopedist, Dr. Rodrigo Álvarez Cambras. I met Álvarez Cambras in Havana a few years ago, and he mentioned to me that he had treated Saddam Hussein and also his elder son, Uday, after Uday was gunned down and virtually paralyzed in an assassination attempt in 1996. Dr. Saleh and I spoke in Spanish for a while, and I said that I was interested in how the recent war casualties were being dealt with. Dr. Saleh is a tall, robust man of forty-eight with a receding hairline and a polite, professional manner. He led me down a long hall toward his office, puffing on a cigarette as we walked. There were many nurses and visitors in the hall, and women in black *abaya* robes squatted on the floor outside some of the rooms. Dr. Saleh stopped to talk briefly with three European doctors from Médecins Sans Frontières, the non-governmental organization that had been in Iraq for several weeks, assisting Iraqi doctors.

One of Dr. Saleh's assistants, a young woman, had pulled some images up on a computer screen in his office. Dr. Saleh invited me to look at them with him. The first image the assistant showed us

was of a boy lying naked in the emergency operating theatre. A catheter and tube was attached to his penis. The child's legs were smooth, but his entire torso was black, and his arms were horribly burned. At about the biceps, the flesh of both arms became charred, black grotesqueries. One of his hands was a twisted, melted claw. His other arm had apparently been burned off at the elbow, and two long bones were sticking out of it. It looked like something that might be found in a barbecue pit.

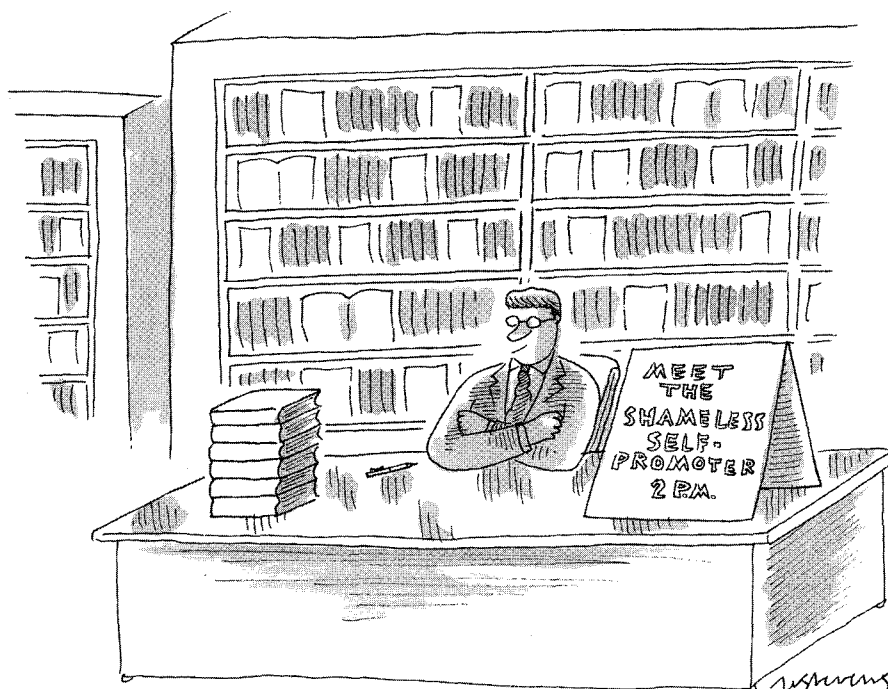
The child's face was covered by an anesthesia mask. "This is Ali," Dr. Saleh said. "He is twelve. He was wounded in a rocket attack the night before last in the southeastern part of Baghdad, about fifteen minutes from here. Ali lost his mother, his father, and his six brothers and sisters. Four homes were destroyed; in one of them, the whole family was killed, eight people."

It was hard to imagine that the person in the photograph could be alive, but Dr. Saleh said that Ali was still conscious. "I don't think he will survive, though," he said in a flat tone. "These burned people have complications after three or four days; in the first week they usually get septicemia." His assistant was pulling up new images on her monitor. They showed Ali again, on the same bed and in the same position as before, but this time without his charred appendages. Both arms had been amputated,

and the stumps were wrapped in white bandages. His torso was covered in some kind of clear grease. The mask had been removed from his face, and he appeared to be sleeping. He had a beautiful head, with the feminine features of a prepubescent boy. In another picture, Ali was awake, staring at the camera with large, expressionless eyes.

Dr. Saleh's assistant breathed in sharply and put one hand over her mouth. Then she brought up some images of Ali's family just after the bodies had arrived at the hospital's morgue. It was difficult to make out what had once been human beings. Cloth stuck to the bodies, bits of bold red-and-green fabric with flower designs. There seemed to be some straw mixed in, and I asked Dr. Saleh if they had been farming people. He said yes, and pointed out Ali's mother. Her face had been cut in half, as if by a giant cleaver, and her mouth was yawning open. In other pictures, which Dr. Saleh said were of Ali's father and a younger sister, all I could see was a macabre collection of charred body parts and some red flesh. The body of his brother was all there, it seemed, but from the nose up his head was gone, simply sheared off, like the head of a rubber doll. His mouth, like that of his mother, was open, as if he were screaming.

"Have you seen enough?" the assistant asked me quietly. I didn't say anything, so she showed me more pic-



tures. After a few minutes of this, Dr. Saleh said, "O.K. This is just part of the tragedy." He asked me if I wanted to see Ali.

I followed Dr. Saleh to the burn unit, where some men helped us on with green smocks, face masks, gauzy hair nets, and shoe coverings. Then we walked down a bare and quiet hall that reminded me of a prison corridor. The only thing on the walls was a framed portrait of Saddam Hussein. Dr. Saleh opened a door and we went into a small room where an older woman in a black *abaya*, Ali's aunt, was sitting in a chair. A tiny window in the far wall of the room let in some sunlight. The aunt was sitting next to a bed on wheels that had a hooplike structure over it. Dr. Saleh carefully pulled back a coarse gray blanket, and I saw Ali's naked chest, his bandaged stumps, and his face. His large eyes were hazel, flecked with green. He had long eyelashes and wavy brown hair. I didn't know what to say.

Dr. Saleh asked Ali how he felt. "O.K.," he said. Wasn't he in a lot of pain, I said to Dr. Saleh, in a whisper. I spoke in English. "No," he replied. "Deeply burned patients don't feel much pain because of the damage to their nerves." I stared at Ali, who looked back at me and at Dr. Saleh. His aunt got up and stood behind the head of the bed. She said nothing.

I asked Dr. Saleh to ask Ali what he was thinking about. Ali spoke for a moment in Arabic, in a boy's soft, high-pitched voice. "He doesn't think of anything, and he doesn't remember anything," Dr. Saleh said. He explained that Ali did not know that his family was dead. I asked Ali about school. He was in the sixth grade, he said, and his favorite subject was geography. As he spoke, his aunt stroked his hair. Did he like sports? Yes, he replied, especially volleyball, and also soccer. Was there anything he wanted, or needed? No, nothing. He looked at me and said something that Saleh didn't translate until I insisted: "He says that Bush is a criminal and he is fighting for oil." Ali had said this as he had said everything else, without expression. Ali's aunt began to sob quietly behind him. I asked Ali what he wanted to

be when he grew up. "An officer," he said, and his aunt cried out, "*Inshallah*"—"If God wills it."

Dr. Saleh had begun to weep, and I could hear him catching his breath. He tried to compose himself, and we said goodbye to Ali. Neither of us spoke as we walked down the hall to the sterile room, where the orderlies took off our smocks and masks. Dr. Saleh rubbed



his eyes and cleared his throat several times. We went back to his office, and he washed his face in a sink. "So it's untrue what they say about doctors being able to suspend their emotions," I said.

He looked at me. His eyes were pink. "We are human beings," he replied. He explained that Ali knew that he had lost his arms, but that he had not acknowledged it yet:

"He is conscious. He can see the stumps." Ali would likely die within three weeks.

Dr. Saleh said that the hospital had taken in about three hundred people who had been injured by the bombing. The doctors had managed to save everyone so far, although twenty people were already dead when they arrived. "War always brings tragedy, fear, pain, and psychological trauma," he said. "Personally, I feel that problems can be solved by discussion and negotiation and collaboration. When you use military power, it means your brain has stopped. As an Iraqi, I feel that this is my country, and that I should work to maintain it and protect it from invasion, whatever invasion it is. I think any person would take this position when his country is attacked."

Dr. Saleh has three sons and a daughter. The oldest child is twelve, the same age as Ali. Dr. Saleh works long hours at the hospital, and ever since the city's telephone exchanges were bombed he hasn't been able to call home to see how his family is doing. He was worried.

The fourteenth day of the war in Baghdad, April 2nd, was pretty and springlike. I went with several journalists on a bus tour to the town of Al Hillah, about sixty miles south of the city, near the ruins of ancient Babylon. We had heard reports that American and British troops had crossed the Euphrates River southeast of Karbala and were advancing

in a thirty-mile-long armored column, but apart from knots of Iraqi soldiers and sandbagged bivouacs on the side of the road—and occasional glimpses of camouflaged tanks and gun emplacements hidden in the sparse copses of eucalyptus trees—there were no signs of war. We could see Saddam's great limestone palace overlooking Babylon, several miles away. Shops were open in Al Hillah and there were few soldiers on the streets. It resembled Baghdad two weeks earlier, before the bombing began.

We were taken to a hospital where there were scores of wounded people. Patients and doctors told us that a village had been bombed two days earlier and that, in a separate incident, the passengers of a bus had been ripped apart in some kind of an explosion. A man who had lost a leg lay next to a man who had had an arm amputated. The man whose arm was gone was being looked after by his wife. Their tiny baby, perhaps a month old, lay on the bed next to its father, swaddled in a cloth with a ribbon around it. The baby was sleeping. Its mother pointed to bandages on its head and told me that it had been hit by shrapnel, too. The man with the missing leg complained, rather mildly, about the attack: "If Americans want to come here as tourists, like they used to, we welcome them. But they shouldn't do this." He dismissed inquiries about his missing limb with bravado. "I am an Iraqi," he said. "We are used to such things."

On the drive back to Baghdad, we saw the vapor trail of an American plane. We watched it guardedly until it became obvious that the plane was heading away from, not toward, us. I nodded off until we got to the city. In our absence, the Baghdad International Trade Fair had been bombed, and a Red Crescent maternity hospital across the road from it had also been hit. An Iraqi man I know, Muhammad, had been driving along the street with his wife at the time of the bombing, he told us, and he had seen the windows of cars blown out and a bus being crushed like a pack of cigarettes. He left the engine of his car running and he and his wife ran for cover. Incredibly, he said, his car was still intact.

Sabah drove us over to see what had happened. A large section of the Trade Fair—where there are permanent pavilions that belong to such countries as

Turkey and Syria—had been obliterated, and nearby buildings, including the Red Crescent hospital, were badly damaged. A group of wild-looking Iraqi fighters were manning heavy machine guns mounted on swivels on the beds of pickup trucks, and we decided it was probably not wise to hang around. Sabah drove very fast—too fast—to get us back to the hotel. For three blocks along the road that cuts past the perimeter walls of the Republican Palace complex all the shop fronts were torn up. Glass and pieces of metal lay tangled on the sidewalks. Some of the shops looked as if they had been looted.

The next day was warm and pleasant, except for the smoke. Birds sang and twittered all over town. Even the *ji-hadis*—the bearded, tough-looking Muslim volunteer fighters who had begun hanging around in recent days—seemed fairly relaxed. I walked past one of them, an Uzbek, perhaps, on the steps of the Sheraton as I came into the hotel. He had a broad face, slanted eyes, and a wispy beard, and his turban was tied so that the cloth hung down like chain mail around his shoulders. He was dressed in a calf-length robe, a military-style webbed belt at the waist. The silver hilt of a long, curved dagger protruded from the belt. It was as if one of Genghis Khan's soldiers had been transported through time and deposited here.

By late afternoon, the skyline was almost totally obscured by smoke. Minarets, domes, and Saddam's samovar-shaped trophy buildings were barely visible through the haze, which turned from brown and black to blue and gray as daylight faded. The bridges that span the Tigris downtown began to vanish in the fog, and the river turned a brilliant gold color. The Thames must have looked like this in Victorian times, shrouded in mist and the smoke from a million coal fires. From somewhere not far away came a steady thump-thumping sound, the noise made by artillery. The barrages got louder, and suddenly all the lights in the hotel went out. Our side of the river was completely dark. Then the whole city became black, except for the odd headlight and the flames from oil fires.

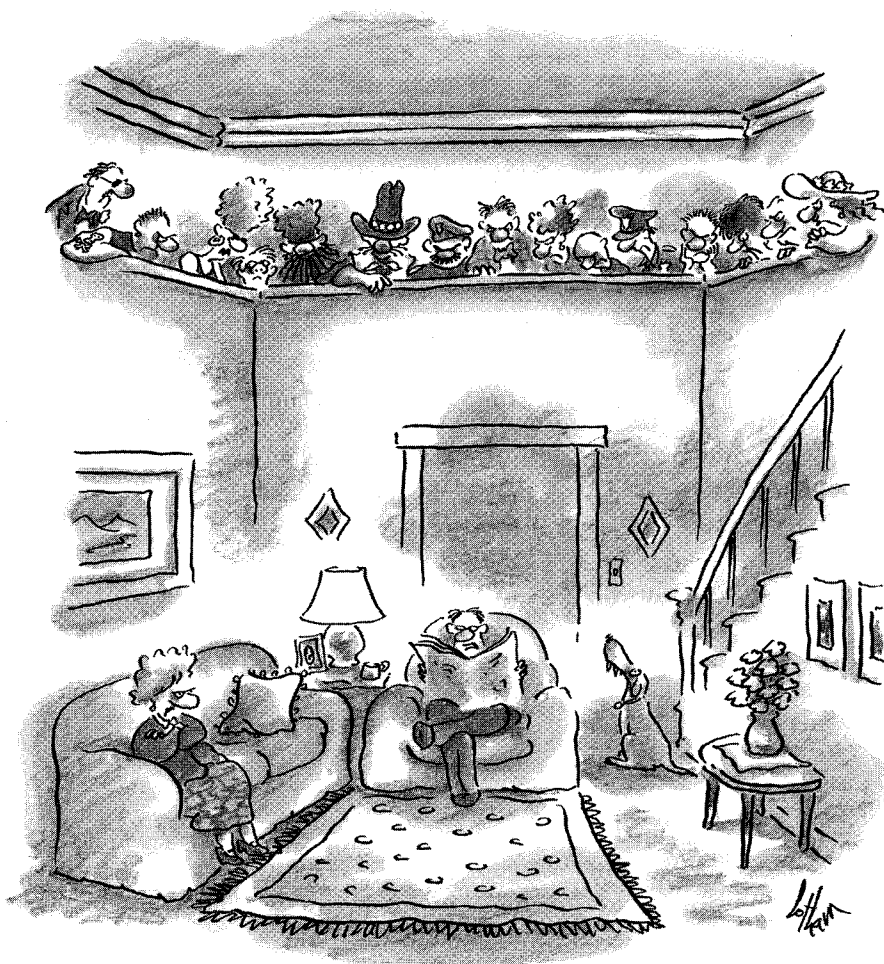
What we were hearing was the battle for the Baghdad airport. The next morning, I drove over to Yarmuk Hospital, just south of the city center, where many of

the wounded had been taken. The wards were full of young men with short-cropped hair in bloody hospital smocks. One of them said that he was a member of the Special Forces of the Republican Guard and had been shot in the lung. His name was Omar Bahaldin, and he was twenty-three. Fluid was being drained from his lung into a plastic jug on the floor. His knees were raised, and he jiggled them back and forth. I thought this was because he was in pain, but he was trying not to show it. "We are not afraid," he said. "I am injured at this moment, but when I get better I will fight and fight, again and again, until I am a martyr." A man on an adjacent cot was writhing and groaning in semi-delirium. His brother was squatting on the floor next to him, holding his shoulders. An older man, his uncle, held on to his feet with both hands. "You are a lion," he said to the wounded man. "We are proud of you."

Early in the evening, Muhammad Said Al Sahaf showed up for a press briefing at the Palestine Hotel. He as-

sured us that the Americans had become "bogged down," and made a somewhat confusing reference to the movie "Wag the Dog." He seemed to feel that the movie helped explain why the Americans had attacked the airport. "To air-drop these men is a showy operation, an exhibitionist attempt to show the world that their shock and horror is succeeding," he said. "But they have thrown their desert animals to be killed."

The electricity had been off all over Baghdad for twenty-four hours, but, oddly, some lights came back on that night in the Republican Palace complex and in several other neighborhoods on the west side of the river. We could hear the rumble of artillery from the outskirts of the city again. What sounded like a firefight, with machine guns and mortars, broke out inside the palace grounds. A bomb was dropped on the compound, and the weapons fire continued for a bit, then died out. It felt as though almost anything could happen in Baghdad that night. ♦



"I notice you've packed the gallery with your relatives."

THE EXTREMIST

The woman behind the most successful radical group in America.

BY MICHAEL SPECTER

Each year, Victoria's Secret puts on a show in which two dozen of the world's most alluring models stroll down the runway dressed in nothing but stilettos and lingerie. Last November, the spectacle was held at New York City's Lexington Avenue Armory, and scalpers were selling tickets for five hundred dollars. Celebrities like Donald Trump, Susan Lucci, and Woody Harrelson were there that night, and eleven million people watched on network television. Security was unusually tight: New York City police were on hand in large numbers, as were many private bodyguards, along with a highly experienced team hired by Victoria's Secret. To enter the armory, guests had to wait half an hour, then file through a checkpoint where their bodies were scanned and their bags searched with great care.

None of that prevented four members of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals from infiltrating the audience. As the Brazilian model Gisele Bündchen made her way down the catwalk, dressed in a beaded bra and black panties, the women leaped onto the stage, unfurling signs that said "Gisele: Fur Scum." The women from PETA, as the animal-rights organization is always called, were gone in less than thirty seconds—dragged off the runway, then arrested, arraigned, and deposited in the Tombs. Gisele, the world's most highly paid model, and the current face of the Blackglama fur ad—"What becomes a legend most?"—seemed unfazed by the commotion; CBS shot the segment again, and the show went on. But film clips and news stories about the attack appeared throughout the world, dominating coverage of the show and infuriating Victoria's Secret.

It was not the first such event that PETA had disrupted, of course. There have been hundreds—in the United States, Europe, once even in Beijing.

PETA activists have crawled through the streets of Paris with leg-hold traps around their feet; they have dumped buckets of money soaked in fake blood on audiences at the International Fur Fair. Recently, the group ran ads comparing the deaths of women murdered and dismembered by a serial killer to those of animals killed for meat. Officially, PETA does not engage in violence, but its leaders wholeheartedly defend and encourage guerrilla groups like the Animal Liberation Front. In fact, Bruce Friedrich, one of PETA's most prominent leaders, says in a speech that is readily available on the Internet, "I think it would be a great thing if, you know, all these fast food outlets and these slaughterhouses and these laboratories and the banks that fund them exploded tomorrow."

One of PETA's best-known slogans is "I'd rather go naked than wear fur," and the group has made good publicly on that promise so many times that the fashion community has come to expect it. Not long after the Victoria's Secret show, I called Gisele's manager, to ask about the episode. She told me that it was important to know that "in real life Gisele doesn't wear fur. It's just not who she is. You will never run into her on the street in fox or mink. Never.

"Gisele did the Blackglama ad because of its history," she continued. "She saw Marlene Dietrich and Bette Davis and Maria Callas, and they were legends. And that is the motto. Gisele saw it that way and so did I. We did not see this as a product." (Neither Blackglama nor Victoria's Secret was willing to talk about the show, PETA, the unwanted publicity, or the ads.)

A few days later, *Us Weekly* reported that Ben Affleck had bought a chinchilla coat in Las Vegas for Jennifer Lopez. PETA's special-projects coordinator, Carrie Beckwith, immediately sent Affleck a letter in which she noted

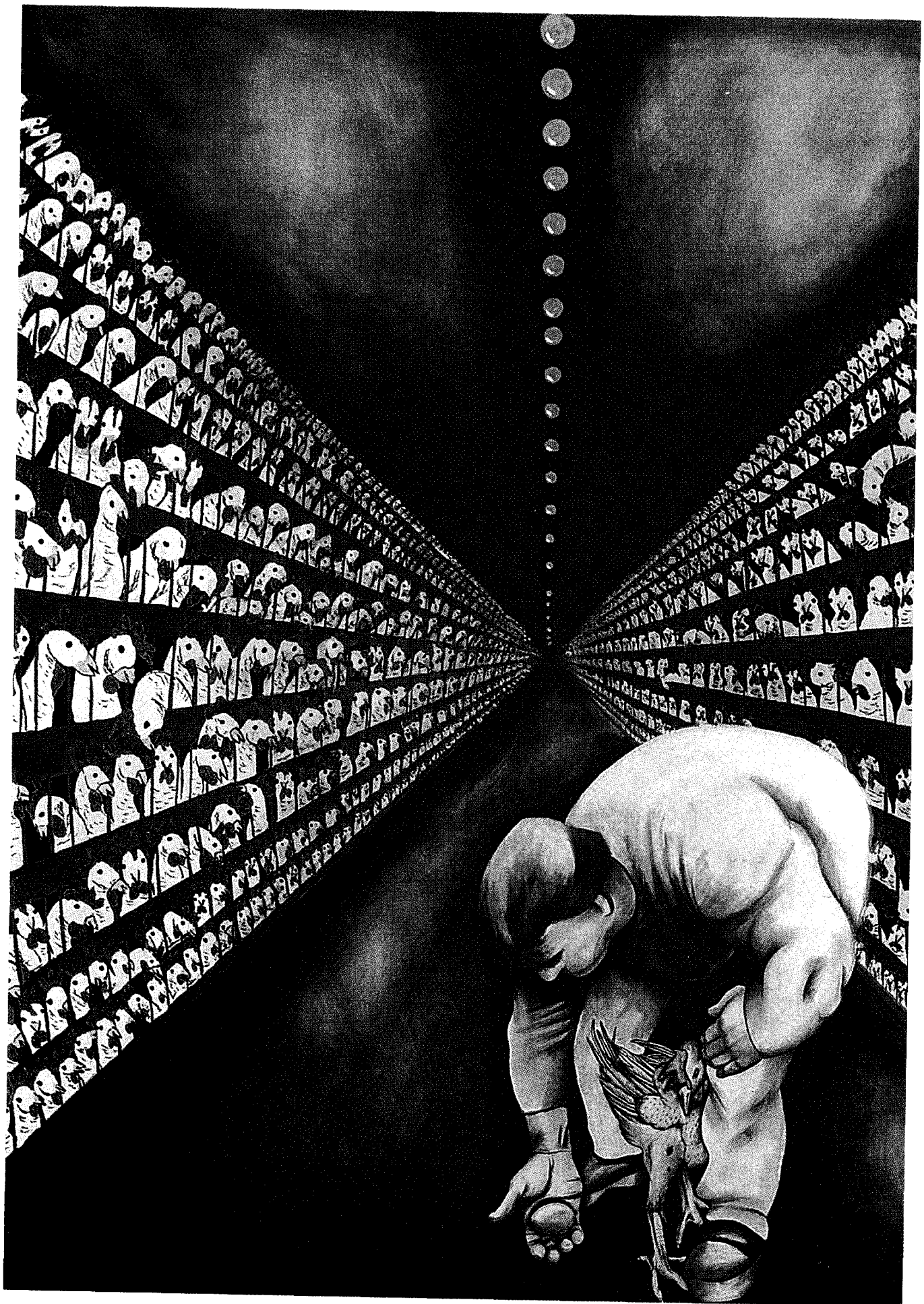
that it takes as many as a hundred chinchillas to make such a coat, and she described the process. "The preferred method of killing chinchillas is by genital electrocution: a method whereby the handler attaches an alligator clamp to the animal's ear and another to her genitalia and flips a switch, sending a jolt of electricity through her skin down the length of her body. The electrical current causes unbearable muscle pain, at the same time working as a paralyzing agent, preventing the animal from screaming or fighting.

"You've been so good to animals in the past," the letter stated. "Now more than ever they need you on their side." To help make her point, she included a graphic video. Affleck replied at once. "You have opened my eyes to a particularly cruel and barbaric treatment of animals," he wrote. "I can assure you I do not endorse such treatment and will not do anything in the future that supports it. . . . I thank you for your letter. . . . A contribution to your organization is forthcoming."

Neither Gisele Bündchen nor Ben Affleck is likely soon to forget their experiences with fur—and that is exactly what PETA had in mind. "There is no secret about why we attacked those people," Ingrid Newkirk, who is PETA's leader, told me later. Newkirk is a fifty-three-year-old woman with sharp blue eyes, an oval face, and a bowl of tidy hair that has recently begun to gray. She often wears sporty, casual clothes, and at first glance looks more like a soccer mom than one of the country's more widely reviled political activists. Newkirk founded PETA two decades ago out of a room in her suburban Maryland home, and it has remained very much under her control as it has grown into the world's largest and best-known animal-rights organization.

"Gisele is a famous, beautiful model," she continued. "Ben is one of the most

"EGG MACHINES" (1991). SUE COE. COURTESY GALERIE ST. ETIENNE, NEW YORK



popular movie stars alive. People pay attention to them and want to be like them. So they needed to be reminded that if they make horrible, cruel decisions there will be unpleasant consequences. Humans need to know that. They need to understand that if they support the torture and misuse of other animals they will be made to pay. The animals are defenseless. They can't talk back, and they can't fight back. But we can. And, no matter what it takes, we always will."

People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals describes itself as an "abolitionist organization," and its thirteen-word mission statement, while simple, is breathtaking in its ambition: "Animals are not ours to eat, wear, experiment on or use for entertainment." PETA believes that animals—and by this it means all animals, from crustaceans to chimpanzees—are on earth to occupy themselves and for no other reason. That humans take advantage of other animals in any way, simply because we are stronger or smarter, PETA sees as the abiding moral outrage of our time. The organization has offended so many people in the two decades since it was founded, by Newkirk and a former colleague, Alex Pacheco, that just to hear the word PETA is enough to make many people shudder—from fear, disgust, or simply weariness.

The group's tactics are often repulsive, but it has a Barnum-like genius for attracting attention. To protest the use of fur in the pages of *Vogue*, PETA once deposited a dead raccoon on the plate of Anna Wintour, the magazine's editor, while she was eating lunch at the Four Seasons in Manhattan. It deployed its own version of the well-known dairy-industry slogan "Got Milk?" to suggest—without a bit of evidence—that the fat in milk somehow caused Rudy Giuliani's cancer. ("Got prostate cancer?" said the billboard, which also had a picture of Giuliani wearing a milk mustache. "Drinking milk contributes to prostate cancer.") Recently, the organization used a similar approach to appeal to a much younger crowd: "Got Beer?" ads have run in many college newspapers throughout the country. ("Better than milk. Find out more at milk-sucks.com.")

Nutritionally, PETA has a point. Yet alcohol abuse has become such a serious problem on college campuses that the ad enraged thousands of people. "It's an irresponsible, recycled publicity stunt that literally puts cows before kids. It's appalling," Wendy Hamilton, the president of Mothers Against Drunk Driving, said. "For Christ's sake, lighten up," Newkirk replied, when I asked her about the campaign. "We simply said that milk is so pathetic that there are even more nutrients in beer. MADD should be happy—they got more press than they ever could have hoped for. We didn't know they would come after us, but I am glad they did. We are always disappointed when people don't come after us."

That is rarely a problem. PETA's publicity formula—eighty per cent outrage, ten per cent each of celebrity and truth—insures that everything it does offends someone. At the end of February, the group began travelling with what may be its most vilified exhibit yet. "Holocaust on Your Plate" compares in great detail what humans routinely do to other animals to Hitler's systematic annihilation of six million Jews. By the end of the first week, the Holocaust Memorial Museum demanded that PETA stop using its photographs; the Anti-Defamation League and hundreds of others denounced it. The exhibit has been vandalized, and PETA members in charge of it have been assaulted. (Like most of PETA's material, the display can be found on-line, at masskilling.com.)

There is never a shortage of stars willing to lend their names to the cause: Alicia Silverstone, Alec Baldwin, Drew Barrymore, and Bill Maher have all appeared in PETA ads. So has Stella McCartney, the only major designer to re-

ject both fur and leather completely. Sir John Gielgud once made a public-service announcement condemning foie gras just by explaining, in powerful detail and at great length, how it is made. (Metal tubes are shoved down the throats of millions of male ducks and geese; they are then force-fed until their livers swell to at least four times their normal size. At that point, the tubes are withdrawn, the birds are killed, and the livers are on their way to the table.)

Naked women also play a central role in PETA's demonstrations and advertisements, and if a political organization can be said to have a muse, then the actress Pamela Anderson is PETA's. In March, she appeared on a gigantic new billboard in Times Square, wearing three strategically placed lettuce leaves. ("People enjoy sex," Newkirk explained. "It's a big part of human nature. So we appeal to that as often as we can. And who could ask for anyone better than Pam? People drool when they look at her. Why wouldn't we use that? We need all the drooling we can get.") In February, Anderson travelled to Vienna, where she had been invited to the annual Opera Ball. When the matrons of Viennese society learned that Anderson's date for the evening would be Dan Mathews, PETA's vice-president of campaigns, they suddenly began cancelling their reservations, fearing what he might do to their furs. The situation got so bad that Mathews, who had taken dance lessons to prepare for the ball, had to fax the organizers to assure them he had no intention of throwing red paint—or anything else—on their clothing. "I plan to use waltzing as a weapon to charm the women out of their furs," Mathews, who functions as the PETA ambassador to the glamour crowd, said. "Special occasions require special tactics."

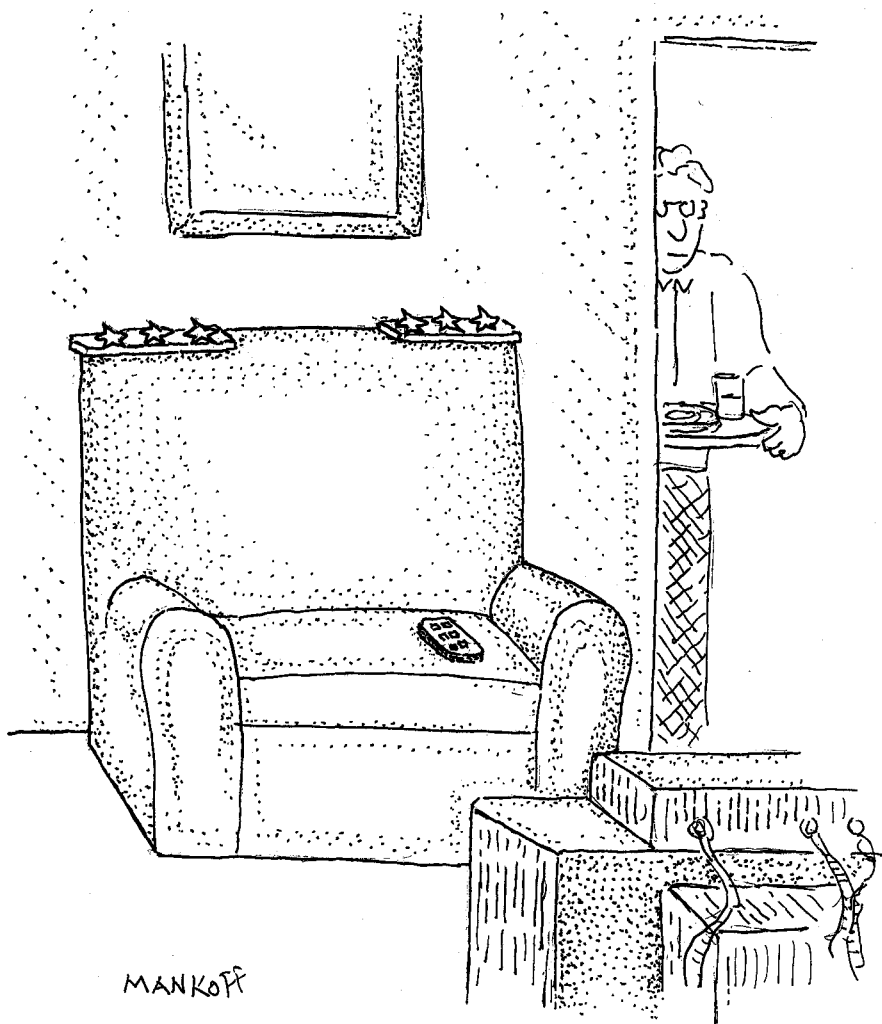
PETA owns a seemingly limitless supply of Web sites, and none of them are subtle. Scientists who experiment on animals have come under particular attack (marchofcrimes.com, stopanimal-tests.com), and, throughout America, at least in part thanks to PETA, most investigators who work with animals in the laboratory—and there are thousands—are now reluctant even to discuss their work in public. "PETA and the other extremists in the animal-liberation move-



ment believe they have to do spectacular things to gain attention," Donald Kennedy, a former commissioner of the Food and Drug Administration and a retired president of Stanford University, told me. "I am sympathetic to that as a philosophy, and certainly we are all more sophisticated about our use of animals than we were twenty years ago. But they are simply wrong when they say you don't ever need to use an animal to develop a drug, design therapies, or study the course of disease. They have harassed legitimate scientists, frightened them, even driven people from the field. Does that really further their cause?"

PETA objects not only to the use of animals in science, and to anything having to do with fur (furismurder.com, furshame.com), but also to zoos (wildlifepimps.com), fishing (fishinghurts.com, lobsterlib.com), and tobacco companies that still test their products on animals (smokinganimals.com). These days, the PETA leadership devotes much of its energy to the issue that it sees as responsible for the most abuse of animals by far: the way American corporations turn billions of cows, pigs, and chickens into meat each year. (kentuckyfriedcruelty.com and murderking.com are just two of many examples; there are also wickedwendys.com and shame-way.com.)

Because circuses appeal so widely to the young, they arouse PETA's particular wrath (circuswatch.com). One night in December, I stood in front of the Savannah Civic Center when the Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey Circus came to town. Newkirk and several colleagues were there, and they spent the evening bearing placards, dodging police, and hectoring scores of families who were entering the coliseum with young children. ("Elephants are mammals!" they shouted. "Mammals have hair. Do you know how trainers remove that hair so the elephants will look good for you tonight? They burn it off with blowtorches. Please make this your last visit to the circus.") The PETA video truck was parked nearby. With elegiac music playing in the background, a continuous loop of clandestinely shot footage ran on the truck's two giant screens, each showing trainers beating, shocking, whipping, and even shooting



elephants. The children who saw the video were horrified, and their parents were furious.

In 1972, Ingrid Newkirk was twenty-two years old, living in Poolesville, Maryland, and studying to become a stockbroker. Her favorite food was liver. One day, her next-door neighbor moved away and abandoned nearly a dozen cats. "They were coming onto my property and having kittens," Newkirk told me during one of our many conversations over the past six months. She looked in the Yellow Pages for the address of the nearest animal shelter, then gathered up the cats and drove over. "When I arrived at the shelter, the woman said, 'Come in the back and we will just put them down there,'" she said. Newkirk was born in England and reared mostly in India. She had only recently moved to the United States, and the phrase "put them down" meant nothing to her.

"I thought, How nice—you will set them up with a place to live. So I waited out front for a while, and then I asked if I could go back and see them, and the woman just looked at me and said, 'What are you talking about? They are all dead.'"

"I just snapped when I heard those kittens were dead," Newkirk told me. "The woman was so rude. The place was a junk heap in the middle of nowhere. It couldn't have been more horrible. For some reason, and even now I don't know what it was, I decided I needed to do something about it. So I thought, I'm going to work here. I went to see the manager, and he said, 'We have one opening in the kennel.' I asked to have it. He said, 'What have you been doing?' and I said, 'Well, actually, I am studying for the brokerage.'" He laughed and told her she was perhaps a bit overqualified, but she begged him to let her try, and, reluctantly, he agreed. The following day,



"Supposedly he's some kind of person in his own right."

Newkirk gave notice at the brokerage and started a new career.

What she saw at the shelter affected her profoundly. "I went to the front office all the time, and I would say, 'John is kicking the dogs and putting them into freezers.' Or I would say, 'They are stepping on the animals, crushing them like grapes, and they don't care.' In the end, I would go to work early, before anyone got there, and I would just kill the animals myself. Because I couldn't stand to let them go through that. I must have killed a thousand of them, sometimes dozens every day. Some of those people would take pleasure in making them suffer. Driving home every night, I would cry just thinking about it. And I just felt, to my bones, this cannot be right. I hadn't thought about animal rights in the broader sense. Not then, or even for a while after. But working at that shelter I just said to myself, 'What is wrong with human beings that we can act this way?'"

For many years, while her father worked in New Delhi as a navigational engineer, Newkirk attended convent boarding schools. "It was the done thing for a British girl in India," she said. "But I was the only British girl in this school. I was hit constantly by nuns, starved by nuns. The whole God thing was shoved right down my throat." When she was eighteen, with the Vietnam War raging,

her father was seconded to the United States Air Force and moved to Florida, where he helped design bombing systems for airplanes and ships.

Ingrid went along with him, and it was there that she met her husband, Steve Newkirk, while pursuing her hobby of auto racing, which remains one of her few genuine passions (sumo wrestling is another). Steve took her to Watkins Glen and introduced her to the baroque world of Formula One; Newkirk has been a fanatic ever since. (The two were divorced in 1980 but are still friendly.) Newkirk thinks nothing of staying up half the night to watch races in Australia or Malaysia. Her office floor, in addition to being covered with welcome mats for cats, and with magazines like *Animal Times* and *Meat & Poultry News*, is strewn with the latest issues of *Car & Driver* and *AutoWeek*.

Ingrid Newkirk is the only person I have ever met—and quite possibly the least likely—to have asked me "Do you know Monte Carlo?" She has been there during racing season, and there is a picture of her hero, the German champion Michael Schumacher, prominently displayed in her office. "I can still remember the smell of the first trip to Watkins Glen," she told me over lunch one day, with a gleam of pure pleasure in her eyes. "At that time you had to use Castrol

motor oil. And the smell of that oil was just divine. They don't use that formula anymore. But I wish they did." I asked her what, exactly, she found so exciting about auto racing. She stared at me as if I were out of my mind. "It's sex," she said. "The first time you hear them rev their engines, my God! That noise goes straight up my spine. It's so electrifyingly glorious."

Newkirk and her husband moved to Maryland in 1970, and after her brief time at the shelter she became a deputy sheriff who focussed on animal-cruelty cases for Montgomery County. By 1976, she had been placed in charge of the animal-disease-control division of the District of Columbia Commission on Public Health. "I loved meat, liver above all," she told me. If liver were somehow morally permissible, I asked her, would she eat it again? "My God, I would eat it tomorrow. Now. I would eat roadkill if I could.

"I'd eat burgers, steak, anything. I love car racing and meat. I am a boy at heart, I am my father's son. When I worked at the Washington humane society, I stayed upstairs, slept in my clothes with my shoes on, after working my day job at the sheriff's office, and then I would be on call at night. On my way down into the District, I would stop in Potomac and pick up triple-ground prime meat. In my refrigerator I had ketchup, Worcestershire sauce, and I would keep eggs. I would break a raw egg and take onions and capers and I would mix it all, and I would go about checking on the animals while eating this raw food right out of my hand.

"I am just a raw-oyster, raw-meat-eating person who happened to find out what happened in the meat industry, and I just can't support it," she continued. "It's so ghastly. So vast and wrong and ghastly."

It was at about this time that Newkirk decided that it was morally impossible to draw a distinction between mistreating a pet and mistreating a pig or a chicken that we will never see until it appears on our plate. By 1980, she had come to believe that it wasn't enough merely to empathize with animals; she had decided that it was unacceptable for humans to use them in any way. From the start, PETA was more radical than

any of the established animal-welfare organizations. In 1981, the group's investigation of the treatment of experimental monkeys in a Maryland laboratory, carried out by Alex Pacheco with walkie-talkies and hidden cameras, resulted in the first police raid of any American research laboratory on suspicion of animal cruelty. The Silver Spring Monkeys, as the case came to be called, made headlines throughout the country.

Newkirk loved the notoriety, and still does; jousting with the media thrills her. "We are complete press sluts," she told me. "It is our obligation. We would be worthless if we were just polite and didn't make any waves." On several occasions during our interviews, she asked if I was looking for any particular kind of quote or theme. I didn't understand what she meant, so she explained: "Well, you know, that Reuters reporter was so thrilled when I told him my position on hoof-and-mouth disease. Don't you need something like that, too?" (Two years ago, when an epidemic of hoof-and-mouth disease terrified Europe and forced farmers to kill millions of animals, Newkirk made no effort to hide her delight. "I openly hope that it comes here," she said. "It wouldn't be any more hideous for the animals—they are all bound for a ghastly death anyway. . . . It will bring economic harm only for those who profit from giving people heart attacks and giving animals a concentration-camp-like existence.")

Newkirk is well read, and she can be witty. When she is not proselytizing, denouncing, or attacking the ninety-nine per cent of humanity that sees the world differently from the way she does, she is good company. After years of detestable public behavior, however, she has the popular image of a monster. Whenever I mentioned her name to friends, they would recoil. And she becomes more disliked with every PETA stunt; she can't walk through an airport without accosting any woman who is wearing fur. She no longer takes vacations in tropical or poor countries like Mexico, because "I spend the whole time rescuing animals from their horrid owners." Some of her actions seem like "Saturday Night Live" skits. On January 26th, for instance, a bomb—dispatched by Palestinian terrorists—exploded on the road between Jerusalem and the West Bank settlement

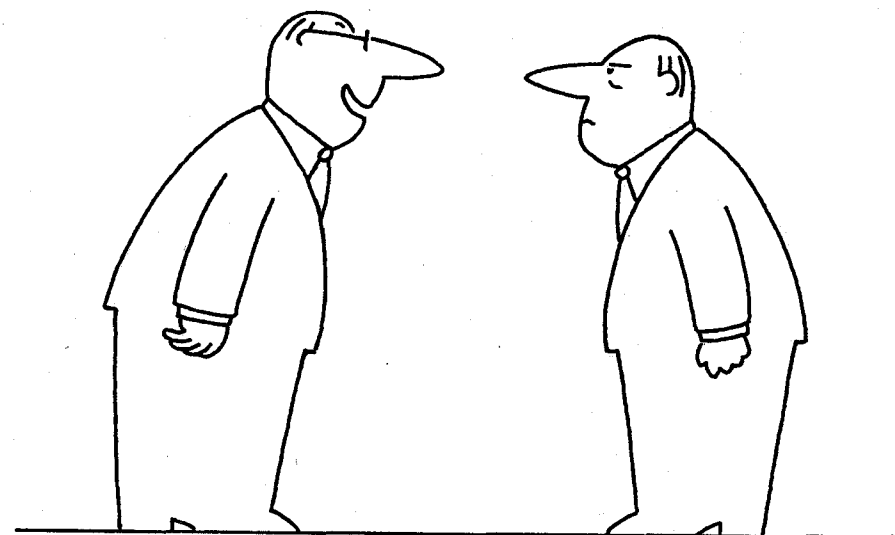
of Gush Etzion. Nobody was seriously injured, but the explosives were strapped onto a donkey and detonated remotely. The donkey was killed. The following week, Newkirk wrote to Yasir Arafat.

"Your Excellency," the letter began. "All nations behave abominably in many ways when they are fighting their enemies, and animals are always caught in the crossfire. The U.S. Army abandoned thousands of loyal service dogs in Vietnam. Al-Qaeda and the British government have both used animals in hideously cruel biological weaponry tests. We watched on television as stray cats in your own compound fled as best they could from the Israeli bulldozers." Newkirk ended the letter by asking Arafat to leave the animals out of the conflict. She made no mention of the vast human toll the violence in the Middle East has taken. "We are named People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals," she told me when I asked about it. "There are plenty of other groups that worry about the humans." A couple of days later, Newkirk sent me a satirical story that ran in the *Onion* headlined, "HEROIC PETA COMMANDOS KILL 49, SAVE RABBIT." She thought it was hilarious.

In her idiosyncratic way, Ingrid Newkirk is a perfectly logical woman: when I asked her about the dangers associated with the rapid proliferation of deer in American suburbs, and suggested that surely their enormous population needed to be culled, she replied by saying, "Deer are native Americans. We are not." She

regards the use of Seeing Eye dogs as an abdication of human responsibility and, because they live as "servants" and are denied the companionship of other dogs, she is wholly opposed to their use. She has had at least one dog taken from its owner. Among her most frequently cited statements is: "When it comes to feelings like hunger, pain, and thirst, a rat is a pig is a dog is a boy." Once, after an hour of frustrating debate on the morality and merit of using animals in scientific research, I asked whether she would remain opposed to experiments on, say, five thousand rats, or even five thousand chimpanzees, if it was required to cure AIDS. "Would you be opposed to experiments on your daughter if you knew it would save fifty million people?" she replied. Medical progress in scores of areas—vaccine development, cancer treatment, genetics, and AIDS, among others—would stop if we began to equate the lives of rats with those of humans. Newkirk doesn't care. "For you this is just a passing issue, a story," she said. "For me it's real. It's a horror I live with every day."

Since November, I have received hundreds of e-mails from Newkirk. Many are informational, some chatty, and others simply absurd. More than a few, though, are heartfelt attempts to explain her particularly bleak view of the universe. When we were in Savannah, she told me, in the most unequivocal terms, that the world would be an infi-



"That's the game, Whitlock—somebody gets emasculated."

nately better place without humans in it at all. I must have shown my astonishment, because by the time I got back to New York, later that day, she had already written thousands of words to me, of which this is only a sample:

There are a billion mean tricks of Nature. And human beings, who aren't "a thing apart" but part of nature, are cruel, out of sheer obliviousness if nothing else, but often out of malice or selfishness. A few clothes and a Jag and being able to read the NYT don't separate "us" from or elevate "us" above the other species! . . . Why does feeling superior mean being able to treat those "beneath us" with contempt? That's what the Nazis did, isn't it? Treated those "others" they thought subhuman by making them lab subjects and so on. Even the Nazis didn't eat the objects of their derision.

The first time we met, I told Newkirk that I was not a vegetarian and not likely to become one. She made it one of her goals not only to change that but to transform me into a vegan. (A vegan does not use, wear, or eat animal products of any kind: no leather shoes, no milk, no eggs—not even honey. Newkirk has had vegan meals from New York City's Candle Café delivered to my office, and she even had a mock beef Wellington FedExed to me.) When I was with Newkirk, I usually ate what she ate—often a delicious mixture of highly spiced vegetables and tofu. Once or twice, however, I transgressed; tears filled her eyes the day I ordered a Cobb salad for lunch. "What does it take, tell me, what does it take to get somebody like you on our side?" she said to me later that afternoon. "I am asking you. This is my chance. You fancy yourself as a decent, socially conscious, well-educated, literate person. How can I reach you? Where am I going wrong?"

PETA is not an easy place to work—Newkirk often starts before dawn, and when she returns home, late, she fires off e-mails for hours. She demands nearly as much from her colleagues. Newkirk is not merely the boss; since 1999, when Pacheco decided to leave to pursue other goals, she has been the monarch. PETA has a board, but only because its tax-exempt status requires one; the board does whatever Newkirk tells it to do. "This is not a democratic organization," she said. "I never pretended that it was. I don't know where exactly it would go if it were a democracy. And I am not willing to give it a try."

Most of the people who work at PETA see Newkirk as flexible and open to suggestions. From time to time, she will even approve actions and campaigns she herself would never undertake. Yet her singular reign has led many in the animal-welfare movement, including former employees, to refer to PETA as Ingrid Newkirk's cult. When I asked her about this, she went white. "That's a very nasty and bad word and it shouldn't be in the article. I can't stand to hear that word. If you put that cult stuff in, nobody will take what we do seriously." She sat silent for a few moments, visibly disturbed. "I am just trying to make the best possible case for the animals. That is clearly what I have been put on earth to do. Even after I am gone I will try to continue." A few days later, she sent me a copy of her will—which previously she had shown only to her attorney. Like nearly everything else Newkirk does, it contains an element of shameless hucksterism, a lot that is hard to take seriously, and a hint, perhaps, of something significant:

While the final decision as to the use of my body remains with PETA, I make the following suggested directions:

a. That the "meat" of my body, or a portion thereof, be used for a human barbecue, to remind the world that the meat of a corpse is all flesh, regardless of whether it comes from a human being or another animal and that fleshfoods are not needed;

b. That my skin, or a portion thereof, be removed and made into leather products, such as purses, to remind the world that human skin and the skin of other animals is the same and that neither is "fabric" or needed;

c. That my feet be removed and umbrella stands or other ornamentation be made from them, as a reminder of the depravity of killing innocent animals, such as elephants, in order that we might use their body parts for household items and decorations;

d. That my eyes be removed, mounted and delivered to the administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency as a reminder that PETA will continue to be watching the agency until it stops poisoning and torturing animals in useless and cruel experiments;

e. That my pointing finger be delivered to Kenneth Feld [the owner of Ringling Brothers] or to a circus museum, to stand as the "Greatest Accusation on Earth" on behalf of the countless animals who have been deprived of all that is natural and pleasant to them, abused and forced into involuntary servitude for the sake of cheap entertainment.

In 1996, Newkirk moved PETA from the Maryland suburbs to Norfolk, Virginia, principally because it's a cheap place to live. Norfolk is the home of the Atlantic Fleet and not exactly a hotbed

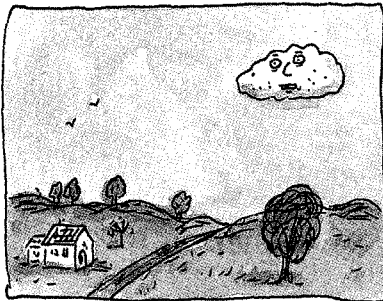
of animal activism, but for two million dollars the group acquired a big building on the Elizabeth River, and more than a hundred people work there. The waterfront is dotted with shipyards, and the shimmering metal-and-glass offices are only a ten-minute walk from the Hampton Roads Naval Historical Museum and the battleship Wisconsin. The place has a Northern European feel to it: steely and gray but soothing, too, with the sun bouncing off the water and onto the building at strange angles. The day I arrived, I watched as a series of the Navy's amphibious assault ships, filled with sailors and marines headed for the Persian Gulf, edged out into the mouth of Chesapeake Bay.

Inside, the building could have been designed by Dr. Doolittle. There is a quotation from Leonardo da Vinci chiselled into the lintel above the reception area: "The day will come when men such as I will look upon the murder of animals the way they now look upon the murder of men." Dogs and cats roam the halls. There are cat ladders throughout the offices, and animals are constantly leaping on and off them. At lunch, dozens of employees slip out to spend some time with their companion animals. (Nobody at PETA would ever use the word "pet.")

Besides Newkirk, the best-known members of the group are Bruce Friedrich and Dan Mathews. It would be hard to find three people who seem to have less in common. Newkirk considers herself a feminist and an atheist. Friedrich, whose title at PETA is director of vegan outreach, functions to some degree as the organization's chief ideologist. He is a soft-spoken man, who, Newkirk once told me, "lives like Christ"; he spent years working in soup kitchens in Washington, where, most of the time, he lives. Friedrich is a devout, even militant, Catholic, who gives twenty per cent of his meagre income to the Church and other charities and is as comfortable marching in an anti-abortion rally as Newkirk is talking about why, at the age of twenty-two, she was sterilized. ("I am not only uninterested in having children. I am opposed to having children. Having a purebred human baby is like having a purebred dog; it is nothing but vanity, human vanity.")

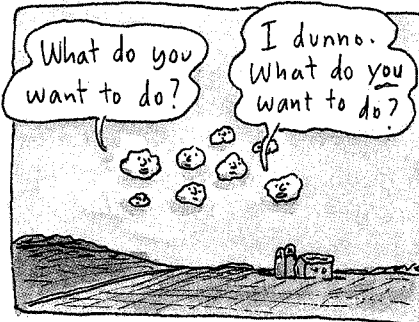
Mathews, the third member of the

CLOUD CHART



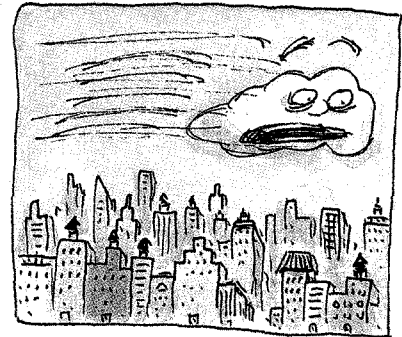
LONERS

Single clouds that like to hang out in an otherwise cloudless sky.



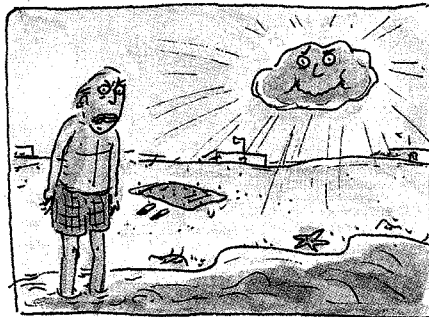
SHEEP

Little clouds that always appear in bunches.



SPEEDY GONZALI

Clouds in a huge hurry to get to the next sky.



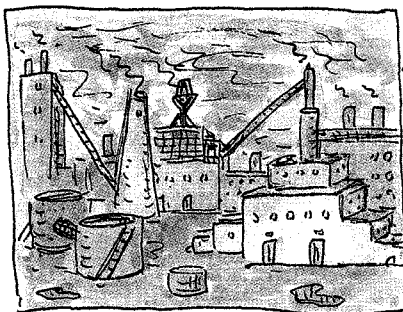
BLOCKERS

Mischievous clouds with a fondness for popping up just as one decides to go in the ocean.



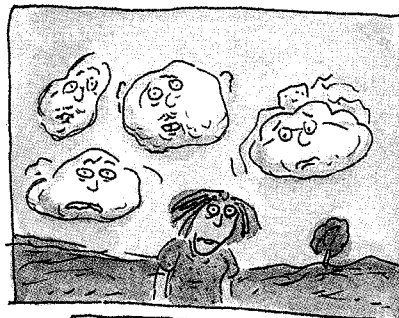
GRAY BLANKET

One vast gray cloud that usually covers several states at once.



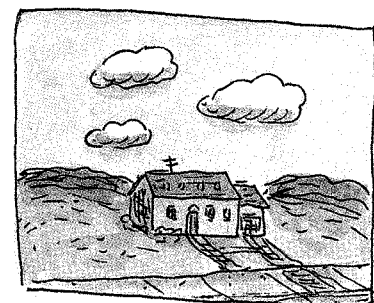
INDUSTRIOS

Beautiful clouds that are most often seen over large manufacturing plants.



SIGMUNDS

Clouds with an uncanny ability to make you feel anxious or depressed.



DUHS

No-name, generic clouds having no meteorological significance whatsoever.

R. Chw

triumvirate, is openly gay. He was raised in California's Orange County, where, as a fat gay boy, he decided that being detested by most people around him wasn't as painful as living a lie. Mathews is six feet five, and zips around Norfolk in a green Suzuki sidekick that he bought used, from a sailor. These days, he looks more like a male model than the chubby teen-ager he once was. Mathews is often Pamela Anderson's "date," and while many of his colleagues live rather ascetic lives, he is just as likely to turn up at a club in Paris or New York as in Norfolk.

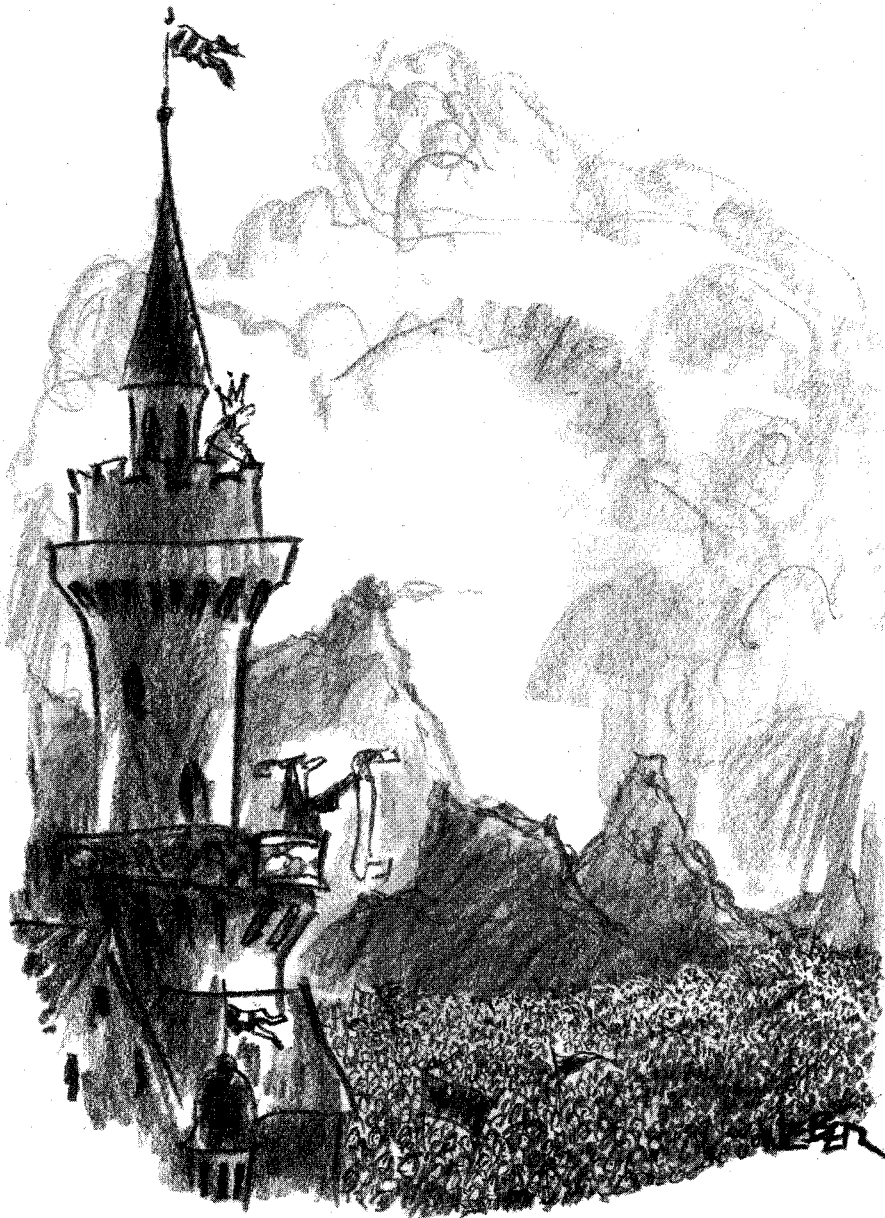
PETA is by far the most successful radical organization in America, raising more than fifteen million dollars

a year, most of it in small contributions from its seven hundred and fifty thousand members and supporters. Newkirk believes in spending as much of that as she can. There are departments devoted to wildlife, companion animals, investigations, advertising, and, particularly lately, kids, who are more susceptible to the message—that vegetarianism makes sense on nutritional and ecological grounds. For the most part, children do not hold PETA in the same negative regard as do many of their parents. (One of the most heavily visited PETA Web sites, peta2.com, is dedicated to youngsters.) The network of eight thousand activists between the ages of thirteen and twenty-four has message boards,

contests, and games. It is run by Marci Hansen, an eager and articulate thirty-four-year-old woman whose last job was as a marketing manager at Amazon.com. Hansen can talk endlessly about skateboarders, snowboarders, Pink, and surfing publications. "We are after the kids who are looking and searching for something," she told me. "Teens want the truth. We walk the talk. You cannot call us hypocrites."

It has been argued many times that in any social movement there has to be somebody radical enough to alienate the mainstream—and to permit more moderate influences to prevail. For every Malcolm X there is a Martin Luther King, Jr., and for every Andrea Dworkin there is a Gloria Steinem. Newkirk and PETA provide a similar dynamic for groups like the Humane Society of the United States, which is the biggest animal-welfare organization in the country and far more moderate than PETA. When I asked Newkirk why she didn't enter political campaigns for animal action and lobby more vigorously on Capitol Hill for her positions, she laughed: "Are you kidding? Dear boy, we are the kiss of death. If we are involved, the legislation is automatically dead. We have members yelling at us, 'Why are you not working on these issues?' But activists just beg us to stay the hell out."

That raises the question of whether PETA's shock tactics and abrasiveness might be so unsavory that they offend many of the very people the group wishes to attract. One day, I put that question to the philosopher Peter Singer, whose book "Animal Liberation" (1975) is often credited with inspiring the modern animal-rights movement; Newkirk told me that it persuaded her to start PETA. "Publicity is a tactic that has worked well for them," Singer said. "Ingrid constantly risks offense, but she seems to feel it does more good than harm." In fact, Newkirk seems openly to court the anger even of people who share her views. "I know feminists hate the naked displays," she told me. "I lose members every time I do it. But my job isn't to hold on to members, as much as I'd like to—it's to get people who just don't give a damn about this issue to look twice." The truth is that ex-



"The clerk will call the roll."

tremism and outrage provide the fundamental fuel for many special-interest groups. Nobody ever stopped hunting because the National Rifle Association supports assault weapons; many of those who oppose abortion are appalled that people in their movement commit acts of violence, yet they are not appalled enough to support abortion. The same is true with PETA, and Newkirk knows it; a vegan isn't going to start eating meat or wearing fur simply because she disapproves of a naked calendar.

Each week, Newkirk holds a kind of war council: she gathers two dozen of her top strategists around a square table in the second-floor conference room to plot their next moves, and while I was in Norfolk she invited me to join them. Jason Baker, who runs the PETA operation in Hong Kong (there are also offices in England, Germany, Holland, and India), presented a slide of a new advertisement he was preparing for the Asian market to publicize the plight of elephants. It is a picture of a naked woman, shackled and in chains. (The woman, Imogen Bailey, was recently voted Australia's sexiest model.) "We are going to put whip marks on her back," Baker explained to approving mutters, "and, if it works visually, tears in her eyes." Newkirk stared at the picture for a minute and then shook her head. "She looks like she's pouting," she said. "It's too sexy. We need to make her look terrified." Baker promised to take care of it.

Next on the agenda: the case of Charlton Heston. Heston has fallen ill with Alzheimer's, a disease with symptoms that can resemble those of Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease, or CJD, the human form of mad-cow disease. Deer have a chronic wasting syndrome similar to that found in cattle, and, tenuous though it is, the link presents PETA with an opportunity to, as Newkirk put it, "toy with the idea that both Alzheimer's and CJD are related to meat consumption."

"We can flaunt the idea that his disease is from deer meat!" somebody shouted. "He has to hunt. He's a gun freak," another person said. The group started to talk about his famous relationship with the National Rifle Association and complain about the gun lobby,



"I'm looking for a tie that says I'm not afraid to ride the subway."

but Newkirk cut them off. "We are not anti-gun, we are pro animals. Don't lose the thread, people." She then suggested renting billboards that would display a large picture of a gaunt Charlton Heston foaming at the mouth. Most of the people in the room were thrilled by the idea. But Joe Haptas, a campaign coordinator, was not among them. "Are you kidding?" he shouted. "That is just mean-spirited. He is an American icon. You can't do this." Newkirk snapped back: "Who said you can't pick on an icon? He is like Anita Bryant. He is pro hunting. He has made his own bed."

Haptas was horrified: "My God, you are talking about Moses. We are going to pick on Moses? It will alienate half our members and most of the known world." Newkirk rolled her eyes and whispered, in a way meant for everyone in the room to hear, "So what?"

The PETA strategy session resembled the pitch meeting of a very bizarre Madison Avenue advertising agency. Nothing was too kooky or unkind to think about. "Should we put somebody on the Atkins cruise?" one person wondered. The Atkins Diet, which is perhaps the most heavily meat-based meal plan in America, was sponsoring a cruise; it would be a meat-eater's paradise, and the idea of crashing it seemed like mischievous fun. But Tracy Rei-

man, who is in charge of international campaigns, quickly brought the group to its senses: "Some people are paying thousands of dollars to go on the cruise. Do you really think we are going to win even one of them over? It would be a waste of time. And, by the way, it would be horrible for whoever gets stuck on that boat with those people. Can you imagine it? They would probably be thrown overboard." The idea was abandoned.

Then it was on to an action planned for one of the Nordstrom department stores. "You know they have a policy where they will take anything back for any reason," Reiman said. "One of our people in Seattle is going to return a dead fox." After that, the eternal question arose: How do you deal with the running of the bulls at Pamplona? PETA, of course, is opposed to it, as it is to bullfighting. So it has decided to sponsor a giant naked race two days before the running of the bulls, in the hope that it will compete for attention (runningofthenudes.com).

PETA's big foray into the world of high fashion came next: the New York collections were coming up, and the group was sponsoring a show by Gaelyn and Cianfarani, who design clothes made from natural fibres, recycled bicycle inner tubes, and sheets of latex. The



"You're right—I'm not listening to you—I'm reading the crawl on the bottom of your screen."

sponsors agreed to give PETA space in the main exhibition tents during Fashion Week, but there was a price: the group was expected to leave everyone else alone. "We just did the Gisele thing, and now we have to behave ourselves," Mathews announced sternly. "That's the deal we made. Agreed?"

The group devoted the biggest block of time to its most important current action: the campaign against KFC. According to the company's Web site, last year the chain served seven hundred and thirty-six million chickens. If the chickens served in its restaurants in 2002 were laid head to claw, they would circle the equator more than eight times. Somebody suggested making Colonel Sanders action figures, or having people go to Louisville basketball games dressed only in a bucket. Another person said that perhaps they

ought to commit civil disobedience at KFC restaurants; getting arrested is always good for the cause. Newkirk quickly rejected that idea. "No," she said. "Once you start, you have to continue, and I don't think we have the resources or the support yet." Everyone agreed that they had to attack the image of the Colonel. "He is loved in Louisville, and he is buried there," someone said. Newkirk's eyes lit up. "Why not find out when his birthday is, call the newspapers, and go dance on his grave?" she said. Then Dan Mathews spoke up again. "I have some great news," he said. "Do you know that fat little guy from 'Seinfeld'? He has become the main pitchman for KFC. Jason Alexander. And beginning in May he is going to star in the West Coast production of 'The Producers.' It's made for us. We can be slamming

him as the play opens. If we do this properly, he will wish he never saw a chicken."

When you drive south along the flats of the Eastern Shore of the Delmarva Peninsula, past Salisbury, Maryland, and down Route 413 or any of the back roads near Crisfield, there are stretches where you will see almost nothing but series of low sheds, each about three hundred yards long. This is poultry country, and it is where many of the chickens we eat spend their lives. I went there for a couple of days this winter, hoping to meet some farmers and visit a processing plant. It wasn't as easy as I had expected. For one thing, nobody was home at most of the places that I visited. Few of those who are under contract to raise chickens can live solely on what they make from the big

poultry concerns like Perdue and Tyson, so, during the day, most of the workers are out at other jobs.

Except for the low hum of a ventilation system, the sheds that I approached were quiet. Every window was covered with thick blackout curtains, and it seemed as if nothing at all were inside. After a few stops without finding a farmer at home, I decided to try one of the doors. It wasn't locked, so I unfastened the latch, swung it open, and walked inside. I was almost knocked to the ground by the overpowering smell of feces and ammonia. My eyes burned and so did my lungs, and I could neither see nor breathe. I put my arm across my mouth and immediately moved back toward the door, where I saw a dimmer switch. I turned it up.

There must have been thirty thousand chickens sitting silently on the floor in front of me. They didn't move, didn't cluck. They were almost like statues of chickens, living in nearly total darkness, and they would spend every minute of their six-week lives that way. Despite the ventilation system, there wasn't much air in the room, and I fled quickly. I drove down Route 13, past trailer homes and one-room shacks, each of which seemed to have a dog chained to a stake in the ground. Eventually, I came upon a nice-looking farm, with a couple of big chicken sheds. There was a slightly incongruous sign out front that said "Marshall's Seafood." Phillip Marshall was sitting on his Bobcat cleaning out a chicken shed—a crop had just been taken to market. On top of the dirt pile, about to be dropped into a Dumpster, a six-week-old chicken was writhing, its head mangled and its bones visibly crushed. But its vastly oversized chest was heaving up and down and its beak dug slowly at the dirt. After a few minutes, Marshall dumped the load and I introduced myself.

Marshall is a plain, soft-spoken man who has spent his entire life on the Delmarva Peninsula, and for thirty years he has been raising chickens, as his father did before him. For a long time he was under contract to Perdue, but now he works with Mountaire. "It's getting harder and harder to make a living," he told me. The company had just come to collect fifty thousand or so chickens, and he was expecting a deliv-

ery of new chicks within the week. The poultry manufacturers provide everything: the chicks, the food, the antibiotics, and all the information required to raise the chickens properly. "It's a formula," Marshall told me. "And these days you really have to stick to it or get out of the business."

Obviously, you can't raise eight billion chickens a year in the quaint pastoral farming system that most Americans still have in their mind's eye. There aren't many places today where cows roam free and chickens lay eggs on a haystack. Less than two per cent of the American population is involved in producing food. American agricultural technology has managed to transform farms into factories, and animals are, as Wayne Pacelle, a senior vice-president of the Humane Society of the United States, put it in an op-ed piece that appeared recently in the *Los Angeles Times*, really nothing more than incredibly efficient "meat-, milk- and egg-producing machines." The only encounters many of us have with animals are when they appear on our plate. Most of these animals never see a day of natural light or spend even an hour free with other members of their species. Chickens live in a constant state of dismal twilight; the darkness makes them logy and encourages them to eat more and move less, both of which help them to grow more rapidly. "That's what the companies call feed conversion," Marshall told me. "It's the amount of feed you need for the weight gain you want. Obviously, you look to use as little food as you can. That's why you don't want them moving around. It just wastes a bunch of calories."

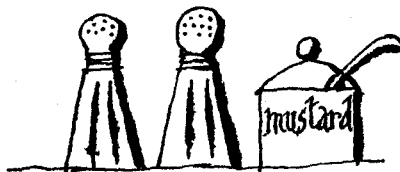
Marshall took me to a nearby plot of land where he maintains more chicken sheds; they were occupied. He pointed out the computer system that regulates the levels of heat, oxygen, and the nutrients in the food. "We have to pay for it, and it's a major expense," he told me. "But the companies push you to do it—because it's better for them, more efficient, and it really turns raising these

chickens into an assembly-line process. We can program it for everything."

Thin metal pipes that look like sprinkler valves run the length of each chicken shed. When the chickens are thirsty, they can drink from these "water nipples." "It's a revolutionary thing," Marshall said. "You used to have to use a trough, and every other day you were in there for hours cleaning them. They would get stopped up, and you would have to fix them or the chickens would die of thirst." We went into one of the sheds—again, the smell was overpowering—and he explained that when the time comes to send the chickens to the factory, crews consisting of eight men show up with big trucks and tons of cages. They drive the trucks right into the shed and put the cages on a forklift. Then they begin to herd, collect, and throw the chickens into the cages. "They can get to throwing those birds around a bit," Marshall said. "It's a tough job." I asked him if he misses the old days on chicken farms. "Personally, of course I do. It was nicer. But as a business it's hard to argue. Factories are what work best in this country. It's sad that you can't see chickens running around in the yard laying eggs. We could raise them free range, but the mortality would be higher, and if you have more than two per cent mortality you lose money. And nobody wants that."

American meat producers have become remarkably specialized and economically adept. Since the animals are seen as widgets, their welfare has never been much of a priority. The guiding imperative is efficiency and economy, and of course you can raise many more chickens, pigs, and cows if you cram them into an aluminum shed or a crate rather than let them wander around the farm. A pig living in a concrete crate that is two feet wide can't move, and that's the point. In 1994, according to the United States Department of Agriculture, seventy-three per cent of the pigs raised in America were on small farms and twenty-seven per cent were on large industrial farms; by 2001, those figures had been reversed.

Litters are bigger and more frequent now, so industrial farms have to pack the animals in as tightly as possible. Pigs



have a four-month gestation period. Before giving birth, the sows are moved from the gestation crates to farrowing crates, which have just enough extra room for the piglets to emerge. When they are taken from the mothers—after three weeks—the sows are immediately impregnated again (through artificial insemination) and returned to their gestation crates. On factory farms, any sow that isn't pregnant or lactating isn't doing her job.

Calves are usually taken from their mothers the day they are born. The females are raised to replace dairy cows, and the males, since they can never produce milk, are raised for meat. Most are killed for beef, but about a million are used for veal in the United States every year. (The veal industry was created solely to take advantage of the large supply of unwanted male calves.) Farmers pack them into crates so small that sometimes they can neither lie down nor turn around. The calves are fed a milk substitute that is deficient in

iron and fibre and is designed to make them anemic. It is the anemia that produces the light-colored flesh for which veal is so highly prized.

Raising meat in America has become such an exact science that, through genetic selection and better knowledge of nutrition, researchers have been able to alter the physical composition of most of the animals we eat. Poultry companies, for example, have reduced the time it takes a chicken to reach its final four-to-five-pound weight from seventeen weeks, in the nineteen-fifties, to six weeks today.

There used to be only one type of chicken in America. Now there are two: egg layers and broilers (the ones we eat). Broiler chickens came into being only in the nineteen-fifties, and over the years they have been genetically selected so that they grow rapidly. The economic success of the system is hard to dispute. The people at Perdue, which has its headquarters in Salisbury, told me with a great deal of pride that their

chickens have "a higher meat to bone ratio than any other in the industry." I asked Joy Mench, a professor in the Department of Animal Sciences at the University of California at Davis, if that was entirely a good thing. Her particular area of research focusses on the effects that leg deformities have on the birds. "The chickens we eat today have been genetically selected for fast growth," she said. "And the skeleton quickly bends and sometimes breaks under the weight of the muscle mass. The way they are raised, in those crowded conditions with no exercise, makes it worse."

Whereas pigs are acknowledged to be smart and social animals capable of making decisions and performing complicated tasks, it is often asserted that chickens are stupid; that if they do feel pain, it is not in any of the ways we would understand, because their brains are not complex enough. Studies have demonstrated that none of that is true. "Chickens show sophisticated social behavior," Mench told me. "That's what a pecking order is all about. They can recognize more than a hundred other chickens and remember them. They have more than thirty types of vocalizations." They also, quite obviously, know all about pain. Scientists have carried out a variety of studies to see whether a chicken will alter its behavior to avoid or alleviate pain. In one such study, at Bristol University, in England, chickens with leg problems were offered two feeders containing identical amounts of the same food. One of the feeders, however, included an analgesic. It didn't take long for the birds to understand their choices. "The chickens will take the analgesic every time," Mench said. "They will do what they can to lessen their pain."

Ingrid Newkirk once told me, with genuine conviction, that McDonald's—which feeds hamburgers and chicken nuggets to twenty million people a day in the United States alone—would stop serving meat in her lifetime. Americans kill nine billion animals each year, mostly for food, so her assessment seemed unrealistic, to say the least. After all, we routinely starve, force-feed, and mutilate animals in order to enjoy a more pleasant, afford-



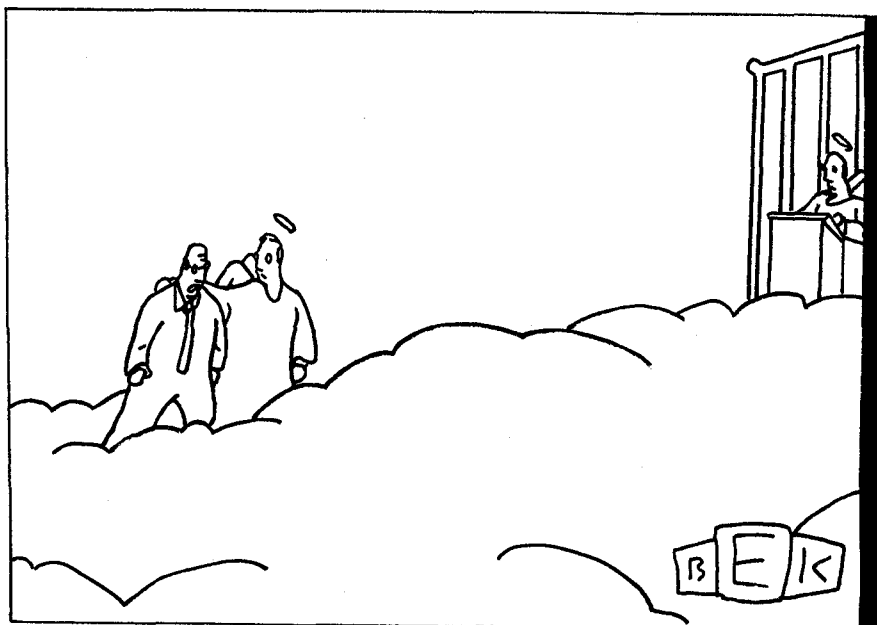
Handelman

"Can I call you back? I'm having sex."

able, or exotic meal. Humans wear the skin of other animals in every possible configuration—and on every part of their bodies. Animal experiments, with everything from macaques to mice, which are manufactured by the million and sold like commodities, are carried out at nearly every major university and scientific institution. And, largely for fun, millions of Americans train shotguns, rifles, and arrows on tens of millions of birds, deer, elk, and rabbits each year, and sportsmen go after lions, elephants, and other big game. For that matter, what child doesn't love to see a bear riding a bicycle or a monkey dressed in a miniature tuxedo at the circus?

After looking at the lives of farm animals and watching PETA work for a while, it seemed to me that the animal-rights movement was going nowhere; it was certainly a long way from the finish line. One day, I asked Bruce Friedrich how he manages to stay undeterred by facts he faces each day. "I do get dispirited at times," Friedrich said. "But let's think historically for a minute. Just a hundred and fifty years ago, many people still owned other people in this country. We didn't even have any child-abuse laws. And it wasn't until 1920, after a vigorous debate in the United States Congress, that the country went about giving those irrational creatures called women the right to vote. And now look around. Women and blacks live in a vastly different world. We all do. There are child-protective services in every county in America. There has just been a sea change in our consciousness about how other people should be treated. Every assumption about human beings has changed.

"So the challenge for us," he continued, "is never to look back and say, 'What are the wrongheaded things that happened a hundred years ago?' It is to say, 'What will society look back upon a hundred or so years from now and think of with equal horror to the way blacks were treated until the middle of the nineteenth century?' In that context, I would have to say we have made remarkable moral progress. In fact, the advances of just the last few years have been staggering. So I don't think it is at all unlikely to conceive of a time when people will recognize that other animals



"Well, so much for antioxidants."

simply do not deserve the treatment they are getting from us."

Could that time be closer than it seems? Between 1940 and 1990, just one animal-protection measure was passed in the United States, but today it is illegal almost everywhere to abuse dogs or cats in any way; people have gone to jail for it. Several cities, including Boulder and San Francisco, have even adopted laws that changed people from pet "owners" into pet "guardians."

Twenty years ago, few Americans knew a vegetarian. American children today are the first generation to live in a culture where vegetarianism is common. By most counts, as many as twenty per cent of all college students identify themselves as vegetarians—and in almost any city one can now find a vegetarian restaurant, or at least eat a decent vegetarian meal. So many teen-agers have given up meat—the number is often put at a million, with one in four teen-agers saying that vegetarianism is "cool"—that the National Cattlemen's Beef Association recently felt compelled to launch a Web site to appeal directly to young girls, who are becoming vegetarians in the greatest numbers (cool-2b-real.com). "Real girls are 'keepin' it real' by building strong bodies and strong minds . . . and they're feeling great about themselves!" the site

proclaims. The implication is simple enough: the girls are keeping it real by eating plenty of meat.

For animals, the biggest changes by far have come from corporate America. In August, 2000, after a withering publicity campaign by PETA, McDonald's became the first major company in the history of the United States to require that all its suppliers meet a set of minimum standards for treating hens. The company said it would no longer work with producers who cut or seared the beaks off chickens (a common practice among farmers trying to keep the hens they cram together in tiny cages from pecking each other to death). McDonald's serves hundreds of millions of eggs each year, and it no longer buys them from suppliers who starve their hens. This practice, called forced molting, shocks the hens into laying extra eggs; it has been standard at thousands of farms. More important, though, McDonald's decided to audit each of the slaughterhouses that supply its food, and the company has walked away from suppliers who failed to live up to the new demands.

Finally, last November, after a campaign led by the Humane Society of the United States, voters in Florida altered the state constitution to forbid

people who raise sows from confining them in concrete or metal gestation crates. The crates are so cramped that, throughout the entire course of their lives, millions of pigs are never able to turn around or even nuzzle their young. It was the first such measure in America to address the means of confinement for animals on farms, and many in the animal-welfare movement have seized on it as a turning point in the long effort—put perhaps most compellingly more than two hundred years ago by the utilitarian philosopher Jeremy Bentham—to recognize that animals are, perhaps, not as different from us as we try to pretend they are:

It may come one day to be recognized that the number of the legs, the villosity of the skin, or the termination of the *os sacrum*, are reasons insufficient for abandoning a sensitive being to the caprice of a tormentor. What else is it that should trace the insuperable line? Is it the faculty of reason, or perhaps the faculty of discourse? But a full-grown horse or dog is beyond comparison a more rational, as well as a more conversable animal, than an infant of a day, a week, or even a month old. But suppose the case were otherwise, what would it avail? The question is not, Can they reason? nor, can they speak? but, can they suffer?

Early on the morning of February 27th, in the Regency Ballroom of the Crown Hyatt in Kansas City, the many members of the American Meat Institute Foundation gathered for an extraordinary two-day session. The institute invited groups like the National Council of Chain Restaurants, the National Chicken Council, the National Pork Board, and the Milk Producers Federation to help sponsor the meeting. All the big fast-food restaurants like McDonald's, Burger King, KFC, and Wendy's buy their food from institute members—in other words, everyone in America who raises, butchers, sells, or serves meat was represented there. The occasion was the group's Animal Care and Handling Conference, and the reason for the overflow audience was simply that, as the institute put it, "over the last twelve months issues related to the humane care and handling of livestock and poultry intended for food have moved to center stage." There was a clear understanding that everyone from McDonald's to the United States government was now beginning to take animal welfare more seriously.

STOLEN

Please go on being yourself.

—From my last letter from William Maxwell, July 28, 2000.

What is it like, to be a stolen painting—to be Rembrandt's "Storm on the Sea of Galilee" or "The Concert," by Vermeer, both burglarized, along with "Chez Tortoni" by Manet, and some Degases, from the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, in Boston, twelve years ago?

Think of how bored they get, stacked in the warehouse somewhere, say in Mattapan, gazing at the back of the butcher paper they are wrapped in, instead of at the rapt glad faces of those who love art.

Only criminals know where they are. The gloom of criminality enshrouds them. Why have we been stolen? they ask themselves. Who has benefitted? Or do they hang admired in some sheikh's sandy palace, or the vault of a mad Manila tycoon?

In their captivity, they may dream of rescue but cannot cry for help. Their paint is inert and crackled, their linen friable. They have one stratagem, the same old one: to be themselves, on and on.

The boat tilts frozen on the storm's wild wave. The concert has halted between two notes. An interregnum, sufficiently extended, becomes an absence. When wise and kindly men die, who will restore disappeared excellence to its throne?

—John Updike

There were geneticists in the audience, as well as breeders, kill supervisors, quality-assurance managers, auditors, economists, harvest directors, engineers, physiologists, and several slaughter-floor group leaders. They came to hear talks like "Customer Attitudes and Expectations About Animal Welfare" and "Creating an Animal Welfare Mindset in Your Company." The focus on improving the lives of the animals we eat was evident.

But why all the fuss? Data presented at the meeting showed that most Americans still don't pay much attention to how their meat lives, is raised, or dies. As

one speaker said, "the disconnect between an animal in the farmland and the cellophane at the grocery store is nearly complete." Many reasons were offered for the increased interest in animal welfare. But Adele Douglass, who delivered the keynote address, told me that it is really simple. "The activists are beginning to win," she said. "And these guys know it." Douglass is the executive director of Humane Farm Animal Care. She began her speech with the formation of the A.S.P.C.A., in 1866—at the time, it protected children as well as animals—and recounted how horses, the trucks of the nineteenth century, were

constantly whipped and starved. She noted that by 1877 animals were being shipped by rail, but species were mixed together in open cattle cars; many turned on each other or froze to death. She ended with the creation of PETA, in 1980, and she said, to a silent audience, "Come on, we have to give them a little credit for all this."

The comments hung over the group like a leaden cloud. As Douglass said to me later, "Ingrid is the Devil to these people. She is what they dream about when they have nightmares." It can't be all that easy for a company that makes meat, and has been boycotted, assaulted, and denigrated in every way, to give credit to such implacable foes. "Good animal treatment is a basic value," Bob Langert, who is the senior director for social responsibility at McDonald's, told me. "There is more to life than just the products we use and buy. People want to know they are visiting a company that stands for something, that cares about the world. . . . And standards of decency matter." He and his company certainly have put a lot of money and effort behind those sentiments. When I asked him whether he felt that PETA had anything to do with this shift in priorities, he declined to say. Langert is a particularly open and forthcoming man, yet he couldn't bring himself to utter the name of the group at all.

Still, as I watched three hundred and fifty of America's leading meat manufacturers wander around the Hyatt, gobbling hors d'oeuvres while getting their first look at the latest advance in animal-stunning technology—the Jarvis pneumatic stunner, which promises "better stunning for improved meat quality"—it was pretty clear that something had changed. And it would be hard to attribute that shift solely to the desire of large corporations to treat animals more gently during their brief, fully programmed lives.

"If you had told me ten years ago that any of this would happen, I would have laughed in your face," Temple Grandin told me. Grandin has spent decades attempting to improve animal welfare at slaughterhouses and processing plants. She is without question the most influential person in the American meat industry today. Grandin gave several pre-

sentations in Kansas City, including one entitled "Inside the Mind of a Steer," in which she got down on all fours, in front of the leaders of the beef industry, and told them they would never understand what might frighten an animal unless they went through the slaughter chutes on their hands and knees and saw it for themselves.

"Since 1999, I have seen more change in the way animals are treated in this country than I did in the previous thirty," Grandin, who is not a vegetarian, told me at the meeting. "McDonald's is the symbol of food in America. For them to have done what they did has changed everything in every way." In fact, since McDonald's adopted its new standards, so have Burger King, Safeway, and Wendy's. Burger King now even offers veggie burgers at each of its eight thousand restaurants in the United States. And in New York, as well as in many other markets, so does McDonald's. PETA, which once picketed Burger King, has actually given the company a pop-up ad on its Web site. Grandin has designed what most people regard as the best slaughterhouses in the world—places where the animals are not bored or beaten, and where they never know they are dying until it's too late to be frightened. Ingrid Newkirk once told me, "Temple Grandin has done more to reduce suffering in the

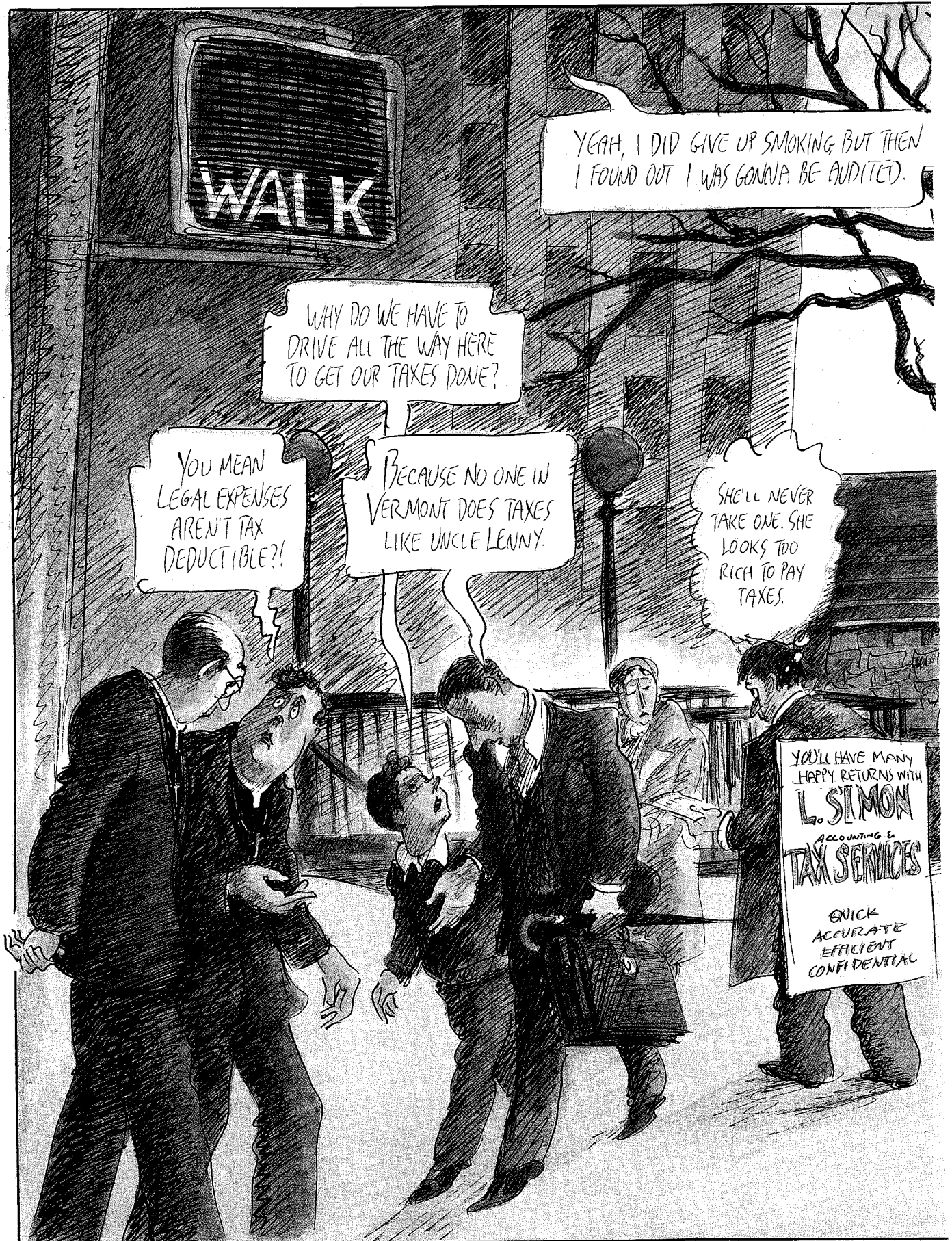
world than any other person who has ever lived." It was a remarkable comment coming from a prophet of absolutism. There is no nuance about her position: as PETA sees it, animals have rights just as we do, and that is why they should not be harmed, imposed upon, or used in any way. Newkirk certainly can see that easing suffering is a worthy objective, but it is never her goal—just a stop along the way. Grandin has a completely different view. After all, she designs death camps for cattle. But, like Jeremy Bentham, Peter Singer, and millions of others, she strives for a way to eliminate needless suffering.

Lately, however, Newkirk seems to understand, and even welcome, compromise. How else could she say nice things about Burger King only because it serves *one* sandwich that isn't based on meat? Why did PETA participate in Fashion Week instead of trying to disrupt it? I asked Newkirk if it was possible that she was softening or changing her approach. She shook her head twice and laughed. But then she said, "You can't pave the road. You have to put down a little gravel. Then somebody else comes and puts down some more gravel. And one day, someday, you have a paved road." She smiled slyly. "In the meantime, it doesn't mean you shouldn't be the biggest nag on earth." ♦



"So—how go the formative years?"

THE CRUELLEST MONTH





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TAX PLAN GIVES
THE POOR A LOT
OF INCENTIVE
TO GET RICH.

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CAN GET
A TAX
CREDIT
FOR
OBJECT
FAILURE.

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NEVER FIND OUT THAT OUR
DEDUCTION IS A CAT.

IF I
WAIT TILL
MIDNIGHT
TO GO TO
THE POST
OFFICE,
I MIGHT
GET ON
TV.

I JUST WISH WE HAD
NAMED HIM BEN OR BOB
INSTEAD OF BOOTS.

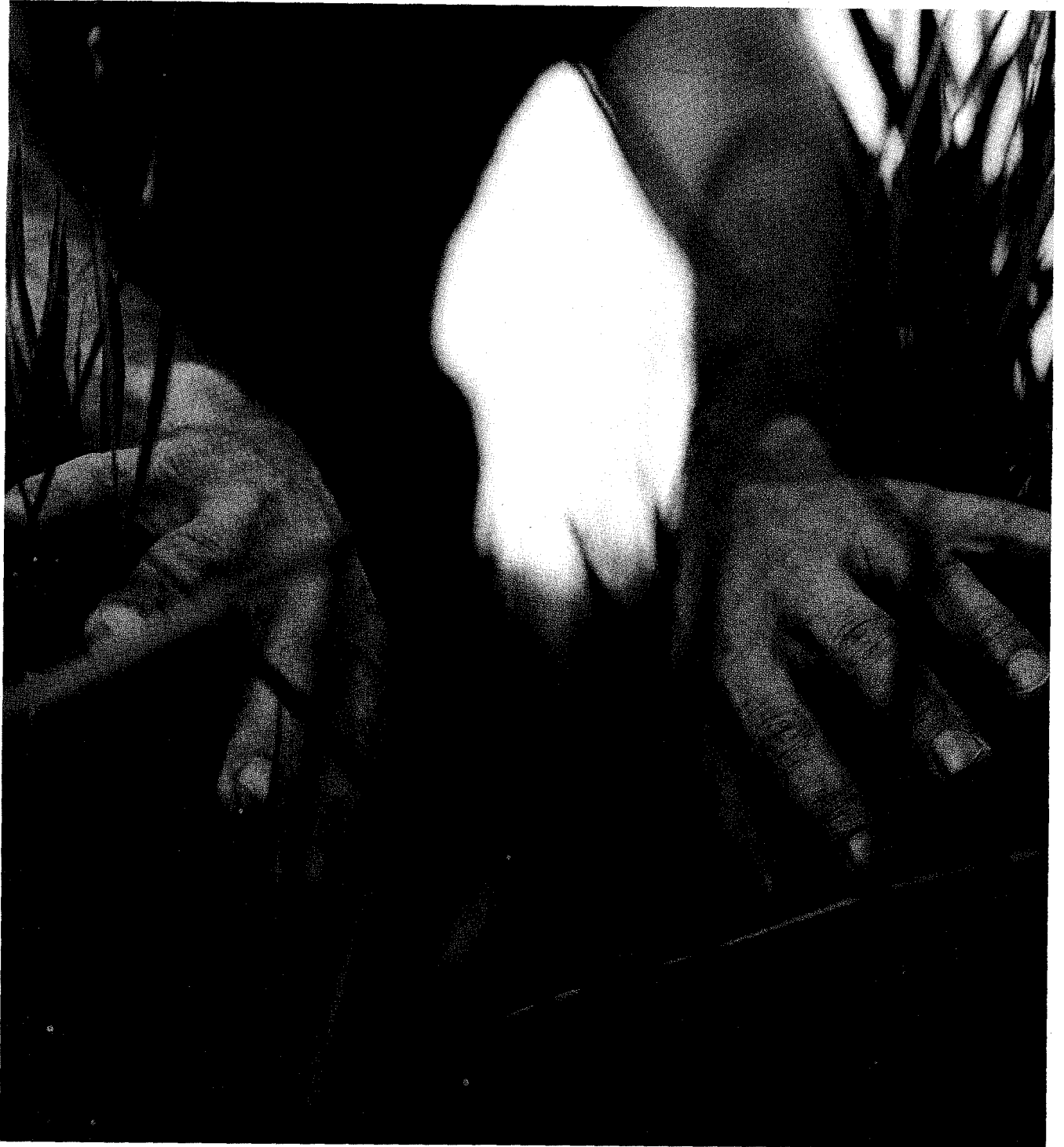
BUT CHILD SUPPORT
ENDS WHEN THE KIDS
GROW UP. YOU'D GET
ALIMONY FOREVER.

I KNOW, BUT YOU DON'T
HAVE TO PAY TAXES
ON CHILD SUPPORT.

FICTION

RED FROM GREEN

BY MAILE MELOY



The summer she turned fifteen, Sam Turner took her last float trip down the river with her father. It was July, and hot, and the water was low. Hardly anyone was on the river but them. They had two inflatable Avon rafts with oaring frames—Sam and her father in one, her uncle Harry and a client from Harry's new law firm in the other. In the fall, she would be a sophomore, which sounded very old to her. She'd been offered a scholarship to a boarding school back East, but she hadn't accepted it yet. Applying had been her father's idea, but now he looked dismayed every time the subject came up. Everyone said what an opportunity it was, so much better than the local schools, but she couldn't bring herself to fill out the forms, and neither of them could talk about it.

Sam had been down the river every summer for as long as she could remember—in a dozen rainstorms, and in hot sun that burned the print of swimsuit straps into her shoulders. Harry, her father's younger brother, sometimes brought his friends, who passed the bottle of schnapps to her when her father was away from the campfire. She liked the smell better than the burning taste. She knew all the campsites and the cliff-shaded turns of the river, and the long, flat stretch through pasture at the end. It was a four-day float trip, or five if you dawdled, or three if her father had to get back to work.

Her uncle's client was the reason they were on the river so late in the summer, when it was all sandbars and rocks. Sam hadn't been told that, exactly, but it was the feeling she got, that they were going for this client. He had come from somewhere else, and was staying in Montana only for the case. She met him at the put-in, unloading the gear. Harry introduced her as his niece.

"You got a name?" the client asked.

"Sam," she said.

"Layton," the client said. He was younger than her uncle, and he wasn't tall, but he was big in the chest and arms. He set a full cooler on the ground and put out a hand to shake hers.

"God, I like being up here," he said. "I'm part Crow, part Blackfoot, part Sioux, I think. Part Jewish." His eyes were blue. He let her hand go. "You have perfect teeth," he said. "Did you have braces?"

"No," she said. She was awkward at fifteen, and praise made her suspicious.

Layton said, "This is gonna be fun."

Her father and Harry drove both empty trucks downriver to the place they'd take out three days later, to leave one and bring the other back. Sam stayed with the rafts, and Layton volunteered to stay with her—to keep her safe, he said. They sat on the bank with the gear, sliding the coolers along the grass as the sun moved, to keep them in the shade. Sam was reading "The Thorn Birds," bought at the supermarket along with the ice and groceries on the way out of town.

"It's not on your reading list," her father had said, dropping it in her lap in the truck. "But it's the best thing they had."

The boarding school had sent her a summer reading list with thirty books on it, books like "The Portrait of a Lady" and "Tender Is the Night," but in her reluctance she'd forgotten to bring one along.

Layton took out a shotgun to clean and oil it. "I bet you're a crack shot," he said. "Montana girl like you. I bet you've got your own guns."

Sam shook her head and kept reading, and he brought the gun over to show her the sight, which was just a notch of steel on the barrel. He crouched close to her shoulder, and she could smell the oil on the gun.

"You don't need a fancy sight for a shotgun," he said. "You ever fire one?"

"No," she said. Her father had guns, but he hadn't been hunting since her mother died. Sam barely remembered her; she'd hit black ice driving to Coeur d'Alene when Sam was four. She sometimes wondered if her father had quit hunting because he'd been busy taking care of her, or if he'd just stopped liking to shoot things.

"Ho, boy," Layton said. He stood up. "We gotta take care of that. Get you a pheasant."

"It isn't bird season."

"No one'll know out here," he said. He ran a cloth over the barrel.

"There are houses on the river," she told him. "It's not very remote."

Layton laughed. "Re-mote. That's a good word."

She felt her cheeks heat up, but didn't say anything.

"I don't need *very* remote," he said. "Just a little remote."

Sam knew that her father wouldn't

tolerate poaching, so she left it for him to take care of. But when he and Harry drove up, her father just looked hard at the shotgun and started loading his boat.

They put in that afternoon, and in spite of the low water they got to the first campsite before dark. Her father had a two-man tent for himself and a burrow for her—a waterproof sack just big enough for a sleeping bag, with a mosquito net at the top. She set up the burrow with her sleeping bag inside, and Layton and Harry built a fire and talked about the case.

Her uncle Harry was childless, and had been jobless on and off. He had always seemed to take pride in being the wild younger brother—Sam's father was a district judge—but something had come over Harry a few years ago, and he had gone to law school and managed to pass the bar. He was a big man with a belly, and everyone liked him. He was trying to get out of debt, and the lawyer he had joined up with had given him Layton's case.

There were four other plaintiffs, all lab workers with neurological damage from exposure to organic solvents. One of them couldn't remember her children's names if someone nearby was wearing perfume. Diesel fumes, bathroom cleaners, scented soaps, new carpet—anything could set it off. Another had stopped driving, because she didn't always know whether a red light meant stop or go. Layton was a key plaintiff, because he had nothing in common with the women except the lab, where he had worked for a month on the wiring, and his tests matched all of theirs. It was good, too, to have a man involved; people were less likely to assume that he was inventing his symptoms. But his symptoms were milder than theirs, and he'd had to be cajoled into joining the lawsuit, and then into sticking around to go to depositions and have more tests. Sam guessed the river trip was part of the cajoling.

"I dunno," Layton said, standing over the fire ring. "I lose my car keys sometimes, but I did that before. I'm not very litigious. I might just take that job in Reno and scrap this whole thing."

Harry frowned at his tower of twigs. "When you could be here?" he said. "Fishing and hunting?"

"It's not even bird season yet," Lay-

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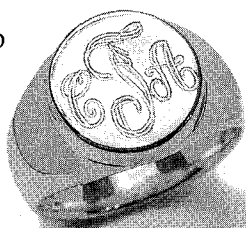
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ton said, and he winked at Sam. "If this thing drags out much longer, I'll go nuts."

Harry said nothing, but worked on the fire.

The next morning, Layton was in the water before breakfast, fishing in waders, which no one ever brought in a boat on the river—you just waded out in shorts. He caught a little brown trout, clubbed its head, and threw it in the raft. Sam's father held the fish to the marks on the raft's rubber bow, and said it wasn't big enough.

"Pull on the tail a little," Layton said. "It'll stretch." He was already moving back into the current, and the fish was dying. Sam saw Harry give her father a look, and her father put the fish in the cooler.

They packed up early and got on the river. Sam rode in the front of her father's raft, lying across the cooler that slid into the metal frame. She read for a while and then fell asleep with the sun on her back, waking to jump in the water and drag the raft over sandbars when it got low.

At camp that afternoon, her father went fishing and she walked away from the river, up toward the hills. The grass in the open was pale yellow, and the path through the trees spiked with sunshine, but she was thinking about boarding school. She had a sense that she wasn't equipped for it. And she was wondering if she really had perfect teeth, and if anyone but adults would ever care. When Layton came through the trees, she knew she'd wanted him to show up, though she hadn't known it before. His attention was different from other adult attention.

"I brought you something," he said.

She waited, but he kept on up the trail, and she followed him. They got over the first hill from camp, and up a second, higher one, and down again into a clearing. There weren't any farms or houses, and they were a long way from the river. Layton reached under his shirt and pulled out a small pistol, dark gray, with a short, square barrel. There was a fallen tree ten yards away, with small branches sticking up, and he stood an empty beer bottle upside down on one of the branches. The last of the beer stained the bark of the tree.

Then he walked back and gave her the pistol. It was still warm from his skin, and heavy.

"Nine-millimetre Ruger semiautomatic," he said. "My pride and joy."

"Can they hear it?"

"I don't think so, with those hills," he said. "Anyway, we're legal. We're not killing anything."

He took her right hand and shaped it around the gun. "One hand like this, arm straight, just like the movies," he said. He reached around her shoulders and positioned her left hand. "The other underneath." He kicked the instep of her right foot. "Bring this leg back."

Sam stepped back and pointed the gun at the bottle, not really breathing, with his chest against her back.

"Close one eye," he said. "Cover your target with the barrel. The gun's going to kick up, but it'll drop right back where you need it. You only need to squeeze a little." He let her go and stepped away.

She missed the bottle completely on the first shot, and the kick surprised her: the gun's explosion shot through her hands and shoulders and down into her legs. The second time, she blew away the upended bottom. The third time, she hit the broken-off neck. Then there was just a little triangle of glass sticking up from the tree.

"Go for it," Layton said.

She did, and hit it, and there was nothing left but a stub of branch.

"Hit the branch," Layton said.

And she did. She'd never been so proud of anything. Layton reached out and rubbed the top of her head, quick.

"She's a sharpshooter," he said. "You're not afraid of the kick yet, so you're not anticipating anything. You've got to keep that."

"O.K.," she said. She could feel herself grinning like an idiot.

"Those perfect teeth," Layton said.

She closed her mouth and looked at the scarred tree where the bottle had been, which made her want to smile again, but she didn't.

"I'm sorry," Layton said.

"That's O.K.," she said.

They walked back to camp, and Layton veered off as they got close, so they came from different angles. They said nothing, and her father and Harry asked nothing. Sam thought they must

have heard the shots, but she figured it could have been Layton shooting alone. She had hit quarters propped in the tree bark, and made a smiley face in a piece of paper. In the pocket of her shorts, she carried an exploded hollow-point, which Layton said wasn't legal to buy anymore, and a warped quarter. Layton slipped the folded smiley face into the camp garbage bag, and told Harry he didn't think there were pheasants out here at all.

Sam's father was making enchiladas in a Dutch oven, and chipping ice for margaritas with a pick. He made one without tequila for Sam. Layton asked for a virgin, too—alcohol made him nauseated since the work in the lab—and got out a little stereo with batteries. Sam's father said it would ruin the silence of nature, but pretty soon he was dancing at the cookstove, singing along to reggae covers. It was still light, and the swallows dived in the canyon. Her father two-stepped over with a big plastic spoon and a chip full of salsa, singing in falsetto, "No you ain't—seen—nothin' like the Might-y Quinn." He gave her the chip and kissed her on the forehead.

Her uncle Harry had too many margaritas and started talking about the case, about those poor, sick people with their lives ruined, and the gall of the people who said they were making it up. When it got dark, he went to bed. The other three sat close around the orange coals of the fire, and her father made up blues songs on the harmonica.

After a while, Layton said, "I need someone to walk on my back if I'm gonna row tomorrow. I'd ask you," he said to Sam's father, "but I'm guessing you weigh about two-fifty."

Her father didn't say anything; he kept playing harmonica.

Layton looked to Sam, who looked at the fire.

"It just takes a minute," he said. "I threw it out on a job, and rowing that boat messed it up."

Her father kept his eyes closed, the harmonica wailing. Sam stood up.

"Shoes off," Layton said.

She slipped off her sandals and left them by the fire. Layton lay on his stomach on the ground. "O.K., step on careful," he said. "Right in the middle." She stepped, squeezing the air out of his

voice. "Now the other foot," he said. "Keep your balance." She could feel his ribs beneath her toes. "Now walk forward, slowly, then back."

She did, and her father got up from the fire. "I'm beat," he said. "We should get an early start tomorrow."

Sam looked at him, and he nodded, as if agreeing with himself. He put away his harmonica and disappeared into the dark, where his tent was pitched. She could hear the rustle of nylon and the whine of the zipper, and then the night was quiet.

"One more time," Layton said. "That's so great. Now if you kneel with your knees between my shoulder blades, that's all I need."

She knelt like he said, lowering her hips to her heels, looking down at her bare knees and the short hair at the back of his head. "Now hold it there," he whispered. "Oh, God."

Then he didn't say anything. The right side of her body was warm from the fire, the left side was cold. It was too cold at night to be wearing shorts. She heard her father roll over in his sleeping bag inside the tent, nylon against nylon.

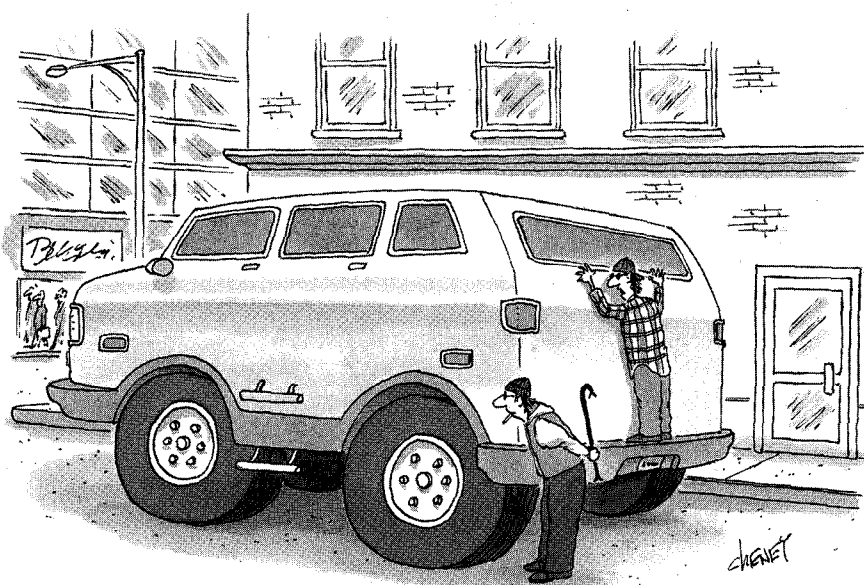
Layton's hand came back and touched her hip. "You're tilted to this side," he said. She straightened. "There," he said, but his hand stayed on her hip. She thought about what to do. His eyes were closed, and he seemed to have forgotten the hand. After a minute, it slipped under the back of her thigh, touching

her skin. She took his wrist and moved it away. The hand paused in the air, then slipped back under her thigh, over her shorts, touching between her legs with a shock like the jolt of the gun firing in her hands. She put her hands on the ground to stand up, awkwardly, but he found her calf and pulled her back down. "Stay," he whispered.

She was on one knee, half-straddling his back in the dust, and he rolled over, facing her. His hand slid up her leg to the small of her back and held tight. His eyes were cloudy and intent, focussed and unfocussed all at once, and she'd never seen a man look that way before.

She pulled away then, and he let her go, and she left the fire and climbed, trembling, into her burrow. She lay awake long after the moon rose, listening to the sounds in the camp: to her father snoring, and Layton finally putting out the fire, and the unzipping of his tent, and the rustle of his going to bed. She kept her hands between her thighs for warmth, and the feeling there was sharp and aching, but she didn't know what to do about it except lie awake breathing until it went away.

When she woke up, Layton was out in the river again, walking downstream and casting at the banks. It was the brightest day yet, and a mayfly hatch hovered over the water, the current dimpled with the open mouths of rising trout. Her father poured the last



"No radio, but there's an orchestra pit."

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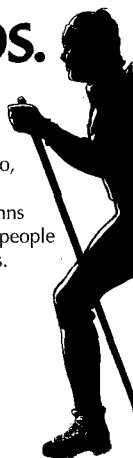
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of the hot water into the oatmeal in her cup, and she ate standing. In her shadow on the ground, she could see her hair, three days uncombed, sticking out on one side. She smoothed it down with her hand.

On the long, flat stretch to the take-out, Sam rowed for a while. Her father pointed out a kingfisher in the brush along the banks, an osprey nest perched on the top of a tall tree. When she got the boat stuck on a rock, her father didn't say anything, but took the oars backward and pried them off. Layton and Harry stayed well ahead. It got hot, and she slipped off the raft and dropped under, feeling the cold current in her hair and clothes.

Layton didn't look at her at the take-out. They deflated the rafts and packed up the truck with the drained-energy feeling of a trip being over, and she changed into dry shorts in the trees. Her father drove and Harry had the other window, so she was squished with Layton in the middle, his left leg pressed against her right.

They dropped her uncle and Layton at the put-in with Harry's truck, and drove home in silence. Sam tried to keep her eyes open, but fell asleep. At the house, they unpacked the truck and hosed out the coolers, and when she gathered up her book and her river shorts the hollow-point fell out of the pocket onto the grass.

Her father picked up the bullet, rolled it in his hand, held it between his fingers. It was copper-cased, splayed out in a blossom of dull lead where the tip had been.

"Where'd you find this?" he asked.

"I shot it." She waited for the next question.

He said nothing, but held out the slug to her, and she took it.

He picked up one of the dry-boxes and carried it into the shed. For a while, she listened to him unpacking, putting pots where they belonged, not noisily or angrily, just putting them away. Then she went into the house and filled out the acceptance form for the scholarship to boarding school, and in the morning she put it in the mail.

She said nothing at first, and life went on as usual: she finished "The Thorn Birds" and saw her friends and ate dinners with her father. They talked about

the weather and the cases he'd heard, and then, after a week, she told him that she'd accepted the scholarship.

He frowned at the table. "Oh," he said. "I mean, that's great."

She wanted to ask why he had left her by the campfire, but instead she said, "Orientation is the last week of August. I should get a ticket."

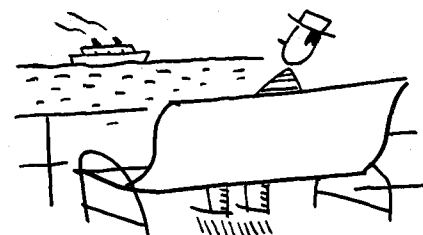
"Sure," he said. "Right." He looked straight at her, and his eyebrows knit together. "I'll miss you here."

She felt a flood of warmth for him, an overwhelming feeling that it was a mistake to go away. He hadn't meant to leave her there. He hadn't known what would happen. He definitely hadn't meant for it to happen. Again she wanted to ask, to make sure, but instead she took her dishes to the sink, and the moment was over.

A few days before she went away, there was a legal brief on the kitchen counter, with the names of her uncle's other plaintiffs but without Layton's. When she asked about it, her father said Layton had left for a job in Reno, and had taken himself off the case. He'd decided his symptoms weren't so bad, and it wasn't worth it. He got little rashes under his eyes and he couldn't drink—so what? He'd needed to stop drinking anyway, he said. There wasn't anything keeping him in Montana, and it was too much of a hassle to stay involved from Reno.

Her father drove her to the airport and carried her bag right up to the gate before saying, for the first time, that he didn't really want her to go. She cried all the way down the jetway, and the man in the seat beside her gave her a packet of Kleenex to stop her nose from running, and patted her shoulder when they landed in Salt Lake.

Someone from the airline told her where to change planes, and from Boston she took the bus she'd been told to take, though it seemed impossible that it could be the right one. She was red-eyed



and nervous, but had decided that she didn't know anything, and the idea of going away was to learn.

The bus took her to a staggered group of brick buildings set back in the trees in a little town. She read "The Portrait of a Lady" that fall, and also "The Beach House" and "Candy." Fifteen was old at boarding school. Most of the kids' parents didn't want them at home, and, knowing that, the kids seemed to know everything. A girl down the hall had done Ecstasy with her boyfriend back in Maryland, and had sex for three hours straight. Sam's roommate, Gabriela—whose last roommate got the Latin teacher fired—was surprised and impressed that Sam was a virgin.

There was a phone in the hall, and when Sam's friends from home asked for her, Gabriela said, "They sound so *western*." One of them, Kelley Timmens, had just sent Sam a letter about a boy they knew: "We didn't have sex," she wrote, "but imagine as *sick* as you can imagine—without having sex."

Gabriela had laughed, reading the letter. "What does she mean?" she asked.

When Sam called home to say that she was going to New York with Gabriela for Thanksgiving, her father said, "I'd get you a ticket home."

"I know," she said. "But it's two days of flying, for two days there." That had been Gabriela's argument.

"Where will you stay?"

"With her mom."

There was a silence on the line, and she imagined the quiet, empty house around him.

"What happened to Harry's case?" she asked.

"Oh, it got dismissed," her father said. "They needed that guy. What was his name? On the river."

"Layton," she said.

"Layton," he said. "You can't blame him. He wasn't really sick."

"And the other people?"

"They can't work," her father said. "They have these awful headaches, all the time, and they can't go out."

"I'm sorry."

"It was a tough case," he said.

He asked a few questions about school, and then they said goodbye and Sam hung up, thinking about the woman

who couldn't drive, because the chemicals in everything made her forget which light meant stop and which go. She lay back on her bed under Gabriela's Charlie Parker poster, and stretched her leg up to her face so her nose touched her knee, which was something Gabriela did. She brought the leg down and stretched the other one up.

She thought about the parties there were supposed to be in New York, and the boy from Exeter Gabriela was thinking about sleeping with, and the dime bag Gabriela was trying to get. She thought about her father eating dinner alone on the dark winter nights, with no one to talk to. And her friends—Kelley Timmens and the others—laughing in the hallway of her old high school, with its rows of lockers and the fluorescent lights reflected in the shiny floors. She thought about the pink cleaning stuff the janitors used, the smell of it in the mornings when she got to school, and the shampoo dispensers on the walls of the girls' gym showers that said "Montana Broom and Brush." She thought about her father nodding to her, after saying good night by the campfire, and about the aching feeling later as she lay in her sleeping bag, and how she hadn't understood what it meant. She smelled Gabriela's soap on the back of her wrist, and then her roommate walked in.

"Where *are* you?" Gabriela asked. "You're doing that spacey thing again."

Sam smiled. "No, I'm here."

"You're *not*. You're off in Montana or something. Do you have any letters from sick Kelley?"

"No."

Gabriela looked disappointed, but then she brightened. "I have to tell you what just happened in the library," she said. "You know that reading room you can lock?"

Sam nodded and rolled over to listen, tucking her pillow under her arms and her chin. The detergent on the pillowcase was Mountain Fresh. Gabriela flopped down on the new rug, and tossed back her long, conditioned hair. The rug was cream-colored and Gabriela ran her hand across it, smoothing the fibres down. She looked a little flushed. "O.K., here's how it started," she said, and the story, full of longing and intrigue, began. ♦

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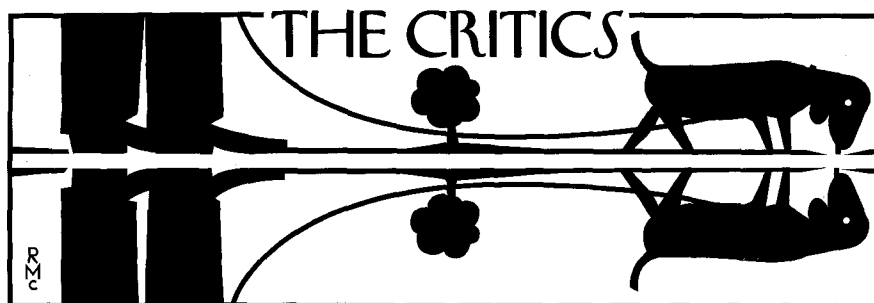
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BOOKS

SEASONS IN HELL

How the Gulag grew.

BY DAVID REMNICK

On a winter afternoon just before the collapse of the Soviet regime, I paid a call on Dmitri Likhachev, an eminent scholar of medieval Russian literature and an embodiment of the tragic history of his city. (The city was called St. Petersburg when he was born, Petrograd when he was growing up, Lenin-grad through his long adulthood, and, for the last eight years of his life, St. Petersburg again.) Likhachev was then eighty-four and a director of the literary institute known as Pushkin House. He had vivid memories of the first days of the Communist era—"When we opened the windows of our flat in Lakhtinskaya Street, we could hear all night long the volleys and short bursts of automatic fire from the Peter and Paul Fortress"—and now he was stealing time from his literary work to make impassioned, morally serious speeches about the liberal era that he hoped was coming. A great deal of Likhachev's authority derived from his biography. He was living proof that the Gulag had been the invention not of Stalin but, rather, of Lenin, the Bolshevik founder, because, he said wearily, "I was a prisoner at Lenin's first concentration camp."

As a young man, Likhachev was a member of a student group that jokingly called itself the Cosmic Academy of Sciences. The members greeted each other by saying, "*Khaire*," Greek for "rejoice." They gathered to present, with mock solemnity, nonsense papers on "Apologetic Theology" or "Elegant Chemistry." To win admission as an "academician,"

Likhachev wrote a treatise on the urgent need to restore the letter "yat" to the Russian alphabet. It was all a way of escaping the increasingly oppressive atmosphere of the times. Then, in February, 1928, there was a knock on his door. Likhachev was arrested and provided with a cell. During the subsequent interrogation, one officer shouted, "What do you mean by language reform? Perhaps we won't have any language at all under socialism."

In time, Likhachev was transported to the Solovetsky Islands—or Solovki—a string of small islands in the White Sea near the Arctic Circle, where medieval Orthodox monks built monasteries, tsars of the sixteenth century built prisons, and, in 1923, the Bolsheviks established a camp. When I was getting to know him, Dmitri Sergeyevich spoke hardly at all of his sentence at Solovki. Glasnost allowed it; his modesty did not. But in 1999, shortly before he died, at ninety-two, Likhachev handed me a gift, a copy of his memoirs. In the book, Likhachev sketches the complicated topography of Solovki, the conditions there, the scholars and criminals he befriended, the varieties of cruelty he witnessed and experienced. Solovki was where the structures and basic tenets of the labor-camp system began to take shape. It was at Solovki, for example, that a system was put in place of feeding prisoners according to their work output (thereby insuring that the weak died of hunger and exposure, while the strong helped to build the industrial infrastructure of the state). It was at Solovki that guards devised

such tortures as crippling a man by forcing him to sit on a pole for eighteen hours straight or killing him by throwing him down a long outdoor stairway. It was where guards exposed prisoners for days to the clouds of mosquitoes that swarmed around the island in summer. Another prisoner recalls, in a memoir, how this torture was modified at a Siberian camp:

The mosquitoes crawled up our sleeves, under our trousers. One's face would blow up from the bites. At the work site, we were brought lunch, and it happened that as you were eating your soup, the mosquitoes would fill up the bowl like buckwheat porridge. They filled up your eyes, your nose and throat, and the taste of them was sweet, like blood.

The prisoners at Solovki were isolated from the world. No one, save the guards and a few monks, witnessed their suffering; they were sure that they would die there and be buried in unmarked graves. And yet, a year after Likhachev arrived at Solovki, he and his fellow-prisoners learned that Maxim Gorky, perhaps the most popular Soviet writer of the time, was coming to visit. Here, at last, was their witness and savior. Gorky was a hero to Russians, not merely for his prose but also for his proletarian authenticity, his adventures as an urchin and a juvenile delinquent, described in "Childhood" and "The Lower Depths." Now Gorky's ship, the *Gleb Boky*, named for the camp chief, was about to dock at Solovki. "All we prisoners were delighted," Likhachev wrote. "That Gorky will spot everything, find out everything. He's been around, you can't fool him. About the logging and the torture on the tree-stumps, the hunger, the disease, the three-tier bunks, those without clothes, the sentences without conviction."

For the occasion, the Solovki administration had spruced up the camp, painted walls, planted trees, allowed husbands and wives to be together (as they never were ordinarily). And, as it turned out, Gorky failed to see beyond the façade that had been erected for him. He seemed disinclined to try. He visited the punishment cells and, after a few short minutes, pronounced them "excellent." He spent hardly any time at all with prisoners, though he did speak for forty minutes with a young boy and declared himself fascinated and pleased. (After Gorky left the camp, Likhachev writes, that boy was

never seen again.) The writer stayed for three days and spent nearly all of it with the secret-police officers who ran the complex.

The Soviet leadership could hardly complain about the essay that Gorky eventually wrote about his experience: "There is no impression of life being over-regulated. No, there is no resem-

began a round of mass executions. "The graves had been dug a day before the shootings," Likhachev recalled. "The executioners were drunk. One bullet per victim. Many were buried alive, just a thin layer of earth over them. In the morning, the earth on the pit was still moving. . . . The camp had been cleared of 'superfluous' persons."

he ordered the authorities in Nizhni Novgorod to "introduce at once mass terror, execute and deport hundreds of prostitutes, drunken soldiers, ex-officers, etc." Trotsky, for his part, warned that if soldiers drafted into the Red Army defied their officers "nothing will remain of them but a wet spot."

Thus began the Red Terror, which



Prisoners during construction of the White Sea Canal (1931 to 1933) hold signs exhorting them to work harder.

blance to a prison; instead it seems as if these rooms are inhabited by passengers rescued from a drowned ship." The political prisoners at Solovki—men like Likhachev—were, according to Gorky, merely "counter-revolutionaries, emotional types, monarchists." It is hard to know to what degree the censors shaped Gorky's thoughts, but the text certainly suggests a man well satisfied with Soviet conditions and Soviet kindness. "If any so-called cultured European society dared to conduct an experiment such as this colony," he wrote, "and if this experiment yielded fruits as ours had, that country would blow all its trumpets and boast about its accomplishments."

After Gorky left Solovki, the guards

The administration at Solovki put up a sign at the main camp, which captured perfectly the Leninist program. It read, "With an Iron Fist, We Will Lead Humanity to Happiness."

Lenin came to power in November, 1917, and the Bolsheviks practiced terror from the first days of the regime. They shuttered the Constituent Assembly and murdered leaders of rival parties such as the Kadets and the Left Socialist Revolutionaries. Yet, as early as January of 1918, Lenin complained that his secret police, originally known as the Cheka, were "inordinately soft, at every step more like jelly than iron." Lenin cast an iron example. In September, 1918,

helped win the civil war for the Bolsheviks and defined the nature of Communist power. At a meeting of Communists, Grigori Zinoviev, one of Lenin's lieutenants, declared that the Party had to carry with it ninety million of the country's hundred million people: "As for the rest, we have nothing to say to them. They must be annihilated." This edict, the historian Richard Pipes has pointed out, was, in effect, "a death sentence on 10 million."

In a new book, "Gulag: A History" (Doubleday; \$35), Anne Applebaum, an op-ed columnist at the Washington Post, provides an ambitious and well-documented survey of the forced-labor system from its inception until its elimi-

nation under Gorbachev. ("Gulag" is an acronym for Glavnoe Upravlenie Lagerei, or Main Camp Administration, but it came to mean, simply, "camp," or, more generally, "the camps.") Applebaum's book is invaluable not so much for the facts it uncovers but, rather, for the extraordinary care with which they are assembled. She draws on an impressive range of sources—camp memoirs, literary works, archival material, personal interviews, and histories in a variety of languages. Although no book on the camp system can ever eclipse Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn's "The Gulag Archipelago," there is surely a place for a comprehensive, popular history such as Applebaum's. At any sizable bookstore, there are dozens of historical works on the Holocaust—beginning with Raul Hilberg's magisterial three-volume work, "The Destruction of the European Jews"—and far fewer on what one of the characters in Milan Kundera's "Ignorance" archly labels the "evil number two" of the twentieth century. The Holocaust has been approached from so many angles of scholarly inquiry and at so many artistic levels—from Anne Frank to Primo Levi,

from Claude Lanzmann to Steven Spielberg—that it is impossible to plead ignorance, except willfully. The literature of the Gulag, though also rich, is far less familiar to the public. A survey like Applebaum's is welcome.

The concentration camp, as both a term and a concept, has complicated beginnings. It was first used to refer to a form of incarceration, when the Spanish military during the Cuban insurrection, Americans in the Philippines, and the British during the Boer War established what were called "concentration camps." These camps were harsh places, where many prisoners died, but they did not begin to suggest the horror that "concentration camp" would soon convey.

Lenin and Trotsky began using the term *kontslager* in 1918, during the civil war, with Trotsky initiating construction of camps to house Czech soldiers fighting Bolshevik forces in Siberia and Lenin calling for their use to sequester the *kulaks*, wealthier farmers with hired hands. The Resolution on Red Terror, issued later that year, provided for the "safeguarding of the Soviet Republic from class enemies by means of isolating them

in concentration camps." The idea was to separate, suppress, or destroy "categories of individuals"—priests, landowners, and other "enemies of the Revolution"—and to begin creating a pool of slave labor. Construction began in 1919. By the end of 1920, Soviet Russia had eighty-four camps, with around fifty thousand prisoners; within three years, the number of camps had quadrupled.

The Soviets did everything possible to conceal the details and statistics of their nascent Gulag system, but the camps were hardly unknown abroad. In fact, they attracted admirers. In March, 1921, a young German politician published an article in the Fascist newspaper *Völkischer Beobachter*, saying, "One prevents the Jewish corruption of our people, if necessary, by confining its instigators to concentration camps." The author, of course, was Adolf Hitler. Nine months later, speaking at the National Club in Berlin, Hitler said that if he was fortunate enough to take power he would build such camps. (In this, he could rely on experienced assistance. Hermann Göring, who directed the building of the first Nazi camps, was the son of Dr. Heinrich Göring, who built labor camps in southern Africa.)

What Lenin initiated, Stalin expanded. The Gulag "metastasized," as Solzhenitsyn put it. All in all, the system had four hundred and seventy-six camp complexes; within each complex there were often dozens, sometimes hundreds, of smaller camp units, called *lag-punkts*. From 1929 until Stalin's death, in 1953, eighteen million people passed through the camp system, both political prisoners and common criminals. Six million more were exiled to isolated, well-policed villages in the Siberian forest or the Kazakh desert, or to *spetsposelki*, special settlements. Under Khrushchev, Brezhnev, Andropov, Chernenko, and Gorbachev, the stream of "politicals" into the camps slowed, but it did not stop completely until the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Where was the Gulag? It was everywhere. There were camps not only in the frozen wastes of the Siberian north and in the Far East but in every corner of the empire, including the biggest cities. When I was living in Moscow as a newspaper reporter, during the Gorbachev-Yeltsin era, a few of my Russian friends



"I'm a stay-at-work dad."

lived in apartments built by prisoners. (One prisoner who worked on a Moscow construction site was Solzhenitsyn; the building still stands, on Leninski Prospekt.) In other cities, what are now called apartments were once camp barracks. The Gulag, in a sense, was *inscribed* into the country as a whole. Enormous regions of the Eurasian landmass, particularly the north and east, were colonized through the establishment of camps. In the Komi region, cities such as Ukhta, Syktyvkar, Pechora, Vorkuta, Inta, and many others either barely existed or did not exist at all until they became camp centers. Stalin hoped to use the camps to help industrialize the Soviet Union. He even thought that the Gulag could be run as a profitable enterprise, though it never was. The architecture of terror is a costly thing. And yet, in what had been a largely peasant country, prisoners built roads, railways, dams, and factories; staffed steel mills, coal mines, ironworks, oil fields; cleared forests in Komi, fished salmon off Sakhalin, slaughtered livestock in the Caucasus. As Applebaum writes, Gulag prisoners made everything from missiles to “mechanical rabbits playing drums.” At Stalin’s order, prisoners even built preposterous public-works projects: rail lines that cut through the forest and then were abandoned when Stalin died; dams to reverse the direction of rivers; canals that proved useless. Prisoners equipped with nothing more than shovels, saws, picks, and wheelbarrows dug an infamous canal between the Baltic Sea and the White Sea; thousands worked themselves to death and were buried in the banks. The leadership published a book extolling the greatness of slave labor and the White Sea Canal. Its editor and principal author was Maxim Gorky.

If Auschwitz-Birkenau was the archetypal camp in the Nazi constellation, then the best known in the Gulag system was Kolyma, in the Russian Far East. Kolyma was not a single camp but, rather, a region six times the size of France, with more than a hundred camps; three million people died there between 1931, when it was inaugurated as an island in the Gulag archipelago, and Stalin’s death. Prisoners from all over Russia and other Soviet republics were packed, standing up, into railcars and were transported, on journeys that sometimes lasted for weeks, to the Far

East, to port cities such as Vladivostok. If they survived the rail journey, and many did not, they were herded onto ships for the final trip north, through the Sea of Okhotsk to Magadan, the newly created capital of Kolyma. In the absence of Dante, those hellish journeys were best described by Yevgenia Ginzburg, in her classic memoir, “Journey Into the Whirlwind,” and by Varlam Shalamov, in his short stories, “Kolyma Tales.” Ginzburg, for example, remembers her fear as murderers and thieves joined the “politicals” on the ship to Magadan: “When I saw this half-naked, tattooed apelike horde invade the hold, I thought that it had been decided that we were to be killed off by mad women. The fetid air reverberated to their shrieks, their ferocious obscenities, their wild laughter and their caterwaulings. . . . Within five minutes we had a thorough introduction to the law of the jungle.”

The ships to Magadan would often stall in the ice. Trapped for days, even weeks, thousands died in the holds. Sometimes the guards fed the corpses to the living; sometimes they pitched them overboard onto the ice floes, where they remained, rotting, until summer. The prisoners who made it to Kolyma labored in the gold mines and other enterprises and often died of starvation and overwork. Shalamov, who was invited years later by Solzhenitsyn to collaborate on “Gulag” (he declined because of illness), survived seventeen years in Kolyma. “I believed a person could consider himself a human being as long as he felt totally prepared to kill himself, to interfere in his own biography,” a character says in the story “The Life of the Engineer Kipreev.” “It was this awareness that provided the will to live. I checked myself—frequently—and felt I had the strength to die, and thus remained alive.”

“Gulag: A History” is structured in three parts: the origins of the camps; the experience of the *zeks* (prisoners), from arrest until death or release; and then a history of the decline of the “camp-industrial complex” until its final collapse, under Gorbachev. Applebaum is a deft synthesizer of both the better-known works and the more obscure, yet astonishingly vivid materials that remain, for the most part, untranslated. Her portrait of the politics of the era is straight-

forward and sufficient for her survey; the book’s emotional power is in her portrait of the victims and what they endured.

Through copious quotation and anecdote, Applebaum methodically, and unflinchingly, provides a sense of what it was like to enter and inhabit the netherworld of the Gulag. From the sources she has assembled, we learn what the daily soup was made of (“spoiled cabbage and potatoes, sometimes with pieces of pig fat, sometimes with herring heads” or “fish or animal lungs and a few potatoes”); the regulation height of the camp fences; the dimensions of the barracks; how women made buttons from bits of chewed bread, sewing needles from fish bones.

The Gulag was a universe with its own languages and codes, and we get a sampling of them: for camp administrators, pregnant women were “books,” women with children were “receipts,” men were “accounts,” exiles were “rubbish,” prisoners under investigation were “envelopes,” a camp division was a “factory.” We learn about the tattoo designs for politicals, addicts, rapists, murderers; we learn of *tufta*, the art of pretending to work, and of *mastyрка*, the art of malingering. The slang of the Gulag eventually became the slang of the entire Soviet Union; the rich vocabulary of Russian obscenity developed mainly in the camps. We learn the telegraphic system—the “alphabet”—used by one prisoner tapping on a cell wall to communicate with another.

Applebaum also catalogues the innovations of camp punishments. Dmitri Panin, a friend of Solzhenitsyn’s, describes executions that required no technology: “An offender caught in the act of stealing bread would be tossed in the air by other prisoners and allowed to crash to the ground; this was repeated several times, damaging his kidneys. Then they would heave him out of the barracks like so much carrion.” Anatoly Marchenko, a human-rights activist who died in the Christopol prison in 1986, describes the varieties of self-mutilation, which included injecting oneself with a dirty needle to induce infection or exposing oneself to the Siberian cold to get frostbitten. Marchenko writes that he saw one prisoner nail his own testicles to a prison bench. Even escape had an unimaginable history. Cannibalism, Applebaum writes, was sometimes a gambit: “Pairs of criminals would agree in advance to escape

along with a third man ('the meat') who was destined to become the sustenance for the other two on their journey."

Applebaum, like any intelligent writer who encounters the subject of the Gulag, gives credit to Solzhenitsyn and "The Gulag Archipelago." It is impossible to name a book that had a greater effect on the political and moral consciousness of the late twentieth century. Not only did Solzhenitsyn deliver the historical truth of the Gulag; he conveyed, as no one else did, its demonic atmosphere and the psychology of both the prisoners and the guards, as well as the mark it left on the entire society. In fact, if Applebaum's "Gulag" leads more readers to Solzhenitsyn then her book will have served an important function. It is not disparaging to Applebaum to say that the relation between the two works is like that between a history of the Trojan War and the *Iliad*.

"The Gulag Archipelago," which was published in the United States by Harper & Row, in three volumes, between 1974 and 1978, was a best-seller, a sensation in the press. It seems a fair guess that hundreds of thousands of copies of "The Gulag Archipelago" sold at the time went unread. Countless copies of Volume 1, its jacket the color of wet cement, sat as still as cinder blocks on the bookshelves of earnest purchasers. Nevertheless, in some countries, particularly France, the book was the decisive event in exploding the lingering illusions of the left about the nature of the Soviet era.

Many factors contributed to the collapse of the Soviet Union—an antiquated economy, a senseless political system incapable of modernizing—and surely the publication of "The Gulag Archipelago" was among them. Solzhenitsyn, who had been a prisoner for eight years, first began making notes for such a project in 1958. With Khrushchev's sanction, he was able to publish his novella "One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich" in the mass-circulation journal *Novyy Mir*, in 1962, and old *zeks* began to write him letters filled with information about life in different camps. He received letters not only from ex-prisoners but from ex-guards, and even ex-secret policemen. He also travelled widely and furtively, visiting friends from his own days in the camps and other witnesses who bravely told him their stories. Working between

sixteen and twenty hours a day, Solzhenitsyn finished the book in 1968 but kept his copies of the manuscript hidden.

On September 1, 1973, Solzhenitsyn learned that the Leningrad K.G.B. had confiscated a copy of the manuscript; his devoted typist, Elizaveta Voronyanskaya, had been interrogated by the K.G.B. and had told of a copy that she had buried at a friend's dacha. Shortly after her arrest, she was found dead of asphyxiation—a suicide. Solzhenitsyn no longer had any choice: he sent a signal to his confederates abroad to publish in the West. Just before the new year, YMCA Press, in Paris, published "The Gulag Archipelago," in Russian. Solzhenitsyn heard the news on the BBC while eating lunch. "I heard the news calmly," he writes in his memoir "The Oak and the Calf," "and continued forking cabbage into my mouth." Solzhenitsyn, who had been awarded the Nobel Prize in 1970, was soon arrested by the K.G.B. and exiled to the West.

The Soviet camp system was not the relatively high-tech factory of death that the Nazis put in place at Belzec, Chelmno, Sobibor, Treblinka, Majdanek, and Auschwitz-Birkenau. There were executions in the Gulag, usually a pistol shot to the back of the head; sometimes exhaust fumes were used to asphyxiate prisoners. But, as Applebaum reminds us, the difference was in intention: "The Soviet camp system as a whole was not deliberately organized to mass-produce corpses—even if, at times, it did." After the occupation of Poland and the Wannsee conference of January, 1942, the main purpose of the Nazi camps was the eradication of the Jews. Stalin intended something else. Using the Gulag, he meant to build a state and hold it in a permanent condition of terror. For a generation, he succeeded.

The Nazi extermination project came to an end, of course, because of military defeat. What followed was a long and complicated process of "de-Nazification." The memory of the war, and of the Holocaust in particular, has come to play an enormous role in Germany's consciousness and politics. Nearly sixty years after the fall of the Third Reich, Berlin's most celebrated building is its Holocaust museum. Such books as Daniel Goldhagen's "Hitler's Willing Executioners" and

Victor Klemperer's wartime diaries are best-sellers and are obsessively debated.

In the post-Soviet world, by contrast, almost no one seems to care about the victims of the old regime. After 1991, there were no "truth commissions," as there were in South Africa and Argentina. The Russian government under Yeltsin did organize a trial of the Communist Party, but it drifted into irrelevance; its verdict went unnoticed. Solzhenitsyn, who returned to Moscow after two decades of American exile, is mocked by much of the liberal intelligentsia; in today's Russia, the readership of "The Gulag Archipelago" is no greater than it is anywhere else. There are a few groups, notably the Memorial Human Rights Center, that do serious work on camp archives. But their popular effect is almost nil.

In August, 1991, after the quick collapse of a K.G.B.-led coup, demonstrators gathered outside the Lubyanka at a huge statue of Lenin's secret-police chief, Feliks Dzerzhinsky. From a crane, a noose was lowered around Iron Feliks's neck and the statue was dragged away. This was the singular picture promising a new epoch. Not long afterward, the Memorial brought a large stone from Solovki to a spot outside the Lubyanka. At a ceremony, a group of activists dedicated the stone to those killed during the Soviet repressions. If I remember accurately, there were no more than a hundred or so people there, and the coverage in the Russian press was fleeting.

A decade later, little has changed. Occasionally, a new statue or plaque is dedicated at a camp or a mass grave, but millions of the dead remain as anonymous and as unremembered as they were in Stalin's time. President Vladimir Putin, a former colonel in the K.G.B. who is wildly popular for having guided the country to some semblance of economic stability, does not hesitate to pay tribute to the wartime heroism of Josef Stalin. Last month marked the fiftieth anniversary of Stalin's death. There were many articles and television programs, but none focussed much on the Gulag and its victims. According to the most reliable polling organization in the country, fifty-three per cent of the people believed that, "in the life of our country," Stalin had played a predominantly positive role. ♦

BRIEFLY NOTED

After, by Steven Brill (Simon & Schuster; \$29.95). Taking the form of daily reports on the "September 12 era," Brill's huge tome weaves together dozens of narratives—of politicians, officials, lawyers, businessmen, and victims' families—to document how the American bureaucracy dealt with the aftermath of the attacks. At more than seven hundred pages, the book is much too long, and some of the characters are more interesting than others, but Brill's experience in law and business helps him make the minutiae of policy and of legal disputes fascinating. His assessments of key players are highly individual; though he portrays John Ashcroft as a power-hungry autocrat unconcerned with constitutional niceties, he rehabilitates the rather battered reputation of Tom Ridge. In Brill's view, the system, despite more government intrusion into daily life, has largely remained a confusing mélange of interest-group lobbying, political infighting, and private initiative. Provocatively, though, he argues that this is a good thing, and that the messy, decentralized approach to getting things done is not a weakness but a strength.

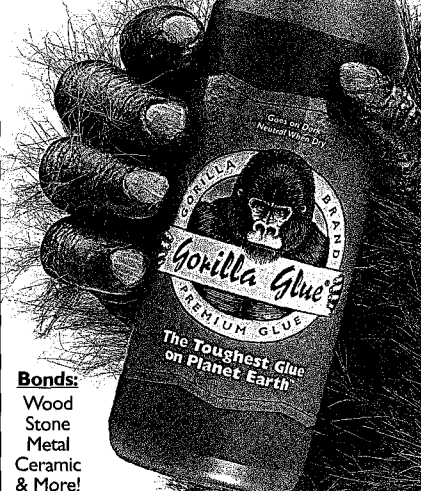
The Mission: Waging War and Keeping Peace with America's Military, by Dana Priest (Norton; \$26.95). This absorbing survey argues that the State Department, because of a lack of funding, has, in the past decade, essentially handed over to the military the task of international relations. The "mission" of the title is vast, and ranges from chasing drug traffickers in Colombia to monitoring town-hall meetings in Kosovo. Priest profiles colorful regional commanders—one sky-dives for relaxation; another practices falconry with the Saudi royals—who operate abroad with astonishing latitude. On the ground with the Special Forces, she finds that their prodigious combat training has not prepared them for such difficulties as per-

suading rival Afghan tribes to live side by side, or fielding a request for sewing machines from a Serbian women's collective. If Priest's account, like her subject, is a bit overextended, she has a sharp sense of the nations who know America best not through diplomats but through soldiers—as when she tells of the king of Swaziland remarking to an American captain, "I'd really like to meet your ambassador."

Family History, by Dani Shapiro (Knopf; \$23). Disaster slams into the charmed lives of an arty couple in small-town Massachusetts when, after the birth of their second child, their teen-age daughter—a beautiful, athletic, straight-A student—suddenly becomes a foul-mouthed, self-mutilating terror. She injures her baby brother and makes a terrible accusation about her father that threatens to destroy the family entirely. The fierce emotional pitch would seem melodramatic were it not for Shapiro's understanding of the mother's anxious, guilt-ridden world. "It's expensive to have your life fall apart," she says as she struggles with the costs of keeping her fractured family afloat—doctors, special schools, psychotherapy—while observing her daughter's every sarcastic flicker to assess whether this is incipient psychosis or merely an awkward age.

The Adventures of a Bed Salesman, by Michael Kumpfmüller, translated from the German by Anthea Bell (Picador; \$25). When we first encounter Heinrich Hampel, in 1962, he is thirty, an affable womanizer in West Germany whose job as a bed salesman affords him continual opportunity. After running up big debts, he flees to the East, where he zigzags from delivering bread and dealing black-market goods to being an informer for the Stasi. Heinrich is a likable scoundrel, and it is easy to see why the book was a best-seller in Germany. Still, the author's insistence that his protagonist symbolize every single aspect of postwar Germany—in the manner of Grass's Oskar Matzerath or Fassbinder's Maria Braun—leaves Heinrich even more of a cipher than the allegory requires.

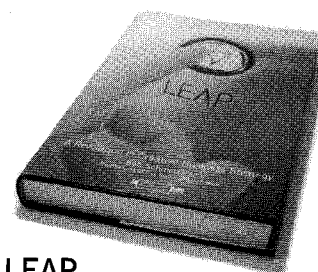
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THE ART WORLD

GRAND FUNK

Elizabeth Murray lightens up.

BY PETER SCHJELDAHL

Elizabeth Murray's enchanting, tough show of recent paintings and drawings at Pace Wildenstein in Chelsea is her best in many years. This makes it an important event in the New York art world. Murray has been eminent and beloved hereabouts for a quarter-century, but she has also been regarded with ambivalence. There are people who don't always like her stuff as much as they wish they did. (I'm one of them.) But the most successful of her paintings assuage all doubts. They are congeries of daffy cartoonish shapes in stretched canvas or jigsawed wood, thickly painted in rich, loud, chafing colors and arrayed on the wall in roughly rectangular layouts. They teem with figurative references to vestigial body parts (fingers, hands, eyes, noses, lips, sex organs); flora (leaves, cacti); fauna (birds, snakes); domestic objects (windows, doors, pieces of furniture, kitchen utensils, handkerchiefs); symbols (arrows, speech balloons, hearts). But the works' chief impact is augustly formal. The various shapes, interacting with literally negative spaces, cohere in the eye and in the mind as balanced, flat pictures. This dynamic is both impressive and very satisfying.

Murray was born in Chicago in 1940, and studied at the Art Institute of Chicago. After sojourns in northern California and elsewhere, she arrived in New York in 1967, and within a few years became celebrated for cheeky abstract paintings that played with generic, modern-art polygons, zigzags, and blobs. Her style was, and remains, indebted to Chicago "imagism," a funky Surrealist movement of the nineteen-sixties. She was also inspired by the example of Philip Guston, who, late in his career, jettisoned the most sensitive of Abstract Expressionist styles in favor of raucous, psychologically raw cartoon imagery. Other formative influences included Claes Oldenburg and Jasper Johns. Murray brought an anarchic expressiveness to the rescue

of New York abstraction, which had become cowed and constipated during the reign of minimalism. (By contrast, the monochromes of Robert Rauschenberg and Brice Marden, for all their excellence, could seem like pupils furtively whispering in the back of a classroom ruled by a fearsome teacher.) With an evolving strategy of decisive, juicy painting on jazzily shaped and layered canvases, she stared down Frank Stella's coldly impersonal painted reliefs of the seventies. To diehard painting fans, her audacity was exhilarating.

Murray is one of a handful of artists, Chuck Close and Terry Winters among them, who carry the sputtering torch of classical New York painting; their work is big in size and in feeling, formally scrupulous, aesthetically adventurous, and nakedly sincere. This tradition has long been in trouble. Around 1980, it was eclipsed by European painters, notably Gerhard Richter, Sigmar Polke, and Anselm Kiefer, who had assimilated American precedents and leaped beyond them by using formats derived from Abstract Expressionism as scaffolds for dazzling conceptual manipulations. A Kiefer could deliver a sublime punch while stirring reflections on sinister modern history. On a more general level, skeptical irony undercut art that smacked of earnestness. Murray suddenly appeared provincial and corny. Her manifest desire to please—her labor-intensive, exhausting sprightliness—began to feel as discomfiting as an overattentive party host. What might be called a lingering Chicagoism, tinged with feminist sentiments in manic evocations of coffee-spilling domestic discord, further limited her appeal.

In the eighties, the New York art world demanded theatrical self-consciousness in painting, and it arrived in the grandiose posturing of Julian Schnabel and the vertiginous sarcasm of David Salle. Such wised-up, European-influenced paint-

ing appeared heroic because it was pitted against fashions in conceptual art and critical theory that were striving to expunge painting altogether from respectable contemporary art. Murray's refusal to surrender her conviction of unbroken continuity with the New York School's principles could seem heroic, too, in a mulish sort of way. She stood exposed as a mere painter. Her prestige stayed aloft—she received a MacArthur grant in 1999—but praise for her work often had an air of special pleading. Even today, some critics are apt to fall back on lauding Murray's yeoman professionalism and palpably ardent heart—condescending tributes, issued with one foot out the door.

What's different now? For one thing, Murray has hit on a brilliant way to lighten up the often strenuous impression of her previous work; her shapes and colors, juxtaposed without toilsome transitions, crackle with surplus energy. For another, the times are changing. The devaluation of modern traditions has pretty much run its course. If anyone has seriously used the word "mainstream" in recent years, I've missed it. And, what do you know, painting goes on. In a Balkanized culture, it is a redoubtable niche specialty. We like to look at it. The paintings in Murray's new show have a great, easy freshness. As I studied them, I recalled the title of a book of poetry by D. H. Lawrence: "Look! We Have Come Through!"

One of the works on view, "Bop" (2002-03), is a breezy masterpiece. Nearly ten feet high and a bit wider, it appears to include about sixteen different paintings of different shapes. Its principal motifs include a blushing-pink cloud bearing a dark-green lightning bolt, a deep-blue, vaguely anthropomorphic blob with a red arrow poking into it (emitting cartoon "pain" rays), and a woozy, bright-orange, winged H shape, marked with parallel red lines, that suggests a piece of clapboard. Along the top and bottom of the canvas, bands of globules penetrated by bevelled "windows" crawl, caterpillarlike. Goofy little biomorphic units that look like dividing cells nestle here and there. An upside-down yellow bird head emerges from the bottom of the orange H and expresses itself in a right-side-up, sky-blue,



"Bop" (left, in Murray's studio) achieves a dazzling unity through fragmentation.

empty speech balloon. I could go on, but you get the idea: the piece is calculated to be indescribable.

A friend of mine characterizes the formal catechism of Murray's new work alliteratively: "structure, scale, surface, smell." (The claylike pungency of slowly drying oils, with its Proustian redolence of studio days and nights, perfumes the show.) In what seems a paradox, Murray achieves unity among these elements by shattering the physical oneness of the painting. The secret of the operation, which looks back to Jasper Johns's flags and targets, lies in her decision to make the drawn shape and the literal shape—idea and object—identical. This method serves Murray by relieving a sense of arbitrariness that has dogged her drawing—a feeling that a particular image could be limned in any number of ways, to the same effect. Murray seems able, like a child, to experience cartoons as hyperreal. I don't have that capacity; and in these days of digital animation I doubt that even children would fall for her "Looney Tunes" manner. In any case, her piecemeal presentation, wedding fantasy to physicality, moots the issue,

and one is freed to concentrate on how incredibly well she paints.

The show is a fiesta of painterly abilities that would have elated Hans Hofmann, who was the obsessive pedagogue of "push-pull" and other craft mysteries for generations of New York painting students. Murray builds tension into every square inch of her surfaces by such means as applying dark or cool colors over bright or warm colors that peek around the edges; the top layer "pushes" while the bottom "pulls." (The same device enabled Mark Rothko to achieve greatness.) Simultaneous attraction and repulsion, seduction and abrasion, engage us in tussles that are amorous or pugnacious, depending on how game we feel. At times, the intensity of Murray's struggle has seemed too much for its pleasures. A couple of overstrained paintings demonstrate the difficulty of the standards she sets for herself. But the success of so many of the works removes any doubt that what she does is worth doing—especially now that no other variety of contemporary art retains the authority to embarrass it. ♦

DANCING

DOUBLE TAKES

New York premières from Paul Taylor and Mark Morris.

BY JOAN ACOCELLA

Paul Taylor had a little fun with the press recently. When his "Promethean Fire" was unveiled at the American Dance Festival in Durham, North Carolina, last June, some reviewers speculated that the piece—with its big cast (the whole company), its black costumes and black backdrop, its saints-in-an-altarpiece formations—might be about the events

D Minor, in the orchestration by Leopold Stokowski, who was the conductor on "Fantasia." And the choreography for "Promethean Fire" is often "music visualization," just like the dances for the hippos and the mushrooms in "Fantasia." On the other hand, this interview scenario, with the journalist offering the artist a human-interest reading of his



Dancers from the Taylor company in "Promethean Fire." Photograph by Chris Callis.

of September 11th. Prior to the work's New York première at City Center a few weeks ago, Gia Kourlas asked Taylor about this, for the *Times*. He answered that if he was thinking about anything when he made "Promethean Fire" it was "Fantasia." Once he said this, you could see it. His piece, like Disney's movie, opens with Bach's Toccata and Fugue in

work—suggesting, for example, that the pool of blood on the floor might mean something—and the artist saying no, no, it's just a composition in red and black, is an old game, and rather suspect. "Promethean Fire" actually does seem to refer to September 11th. Or September 11th is related to something that Taylor has been telling us about for a long time.

Taylor is seventy-two, and he has made more than a hundred dances, but one dance keeps reappearing. It goes like this: The dancers are a kind of community (we're not sure what kind), and they perform maneuvers that they are very earnest about, and which look like rituals. This is somewhat comic—they think they've found an explanation of life. It is somewhat tragic, too, for the same reason. Also, amid the cryptic goings on, Taylor will often insert a painful little scene that we recognize: someone trying and failing to get someone else's attention, someone in trouble and no one caring. The drama is brief; it is quickly submerged in the group activity. Still, Taylor makes his point, or points. First, life is mysterious; everything has some sort of weird underside. Second, life in groups—a matter that dance-company directors are especially attuned to—is more mysterious. It is the group that performs rituals, and enforces them. Personal dramas may surface, but they are soon absorbed into the collective action. We are all grist for a great big mill that we don't understand but that keeps on turning.

September 11th followed that pattern. It is hard to think that so huge an event could be swallowed up, but it was, instantly, by the public commentary on it: the anchors' new tone of voice, the words that passed from mouth to mouth. Even before you had time to figure out how you felt about those people jumping off the towers, or the stoical firemen, they were framed, padded, upholstered by socially enforced sentiment. So we walked around trying to square our actual experience—including not just sorrow and fear but curiosity, excitement, guilt—with the experience we were told we had had.

"Promethean Fire" is like that. The piece does seem to be about death—indeed, murder. The epigraph, "Fire 'that can thy light relume,'" is taken from the speech Othello gives just before killing Desdemona. At one point, the dancers all struggle with an unseen enemy and, one by one, fall "dead" in a pile. Yet the struggle is stylized, comic-bookish. Also, the rest of the choreography, at least in the opening and closing movements, is largely triumphal. There are great, flashy maneuvers—circles intersecting circles, rotating pinwheels—that look like something from a halftime show. In the score, too, pathos collides with pomp. The Bach

pieces that Taylor used—the Prelude in E-Flat Minor and the Chorale Prelude, BWV 680, in addition to the Toccata and Fugue—are stirring. At the same time, they are also very famous. (The Toccata and Fugue is an anthem, almost.) They anoint the dance as much as they accompany it. And Taylor gives them all to us in Stokowski's big, soupy orchestrations. I can't think of a better metaphor for the private-to-public conversion of the events of September 11th.

But the most impressive act of discontinuity comes in the slow, middle movement. Out of that pile of bodies one man rises: Patrick Corbin. He plucks up a woman, Lisa Viola, and together they perform a duet that looks like something happening after death. The tone is one of grim charity. The lifts are awkward, as if to say that bodies are hard to carry. The poses are crooked, as if to say that bones can be broken. Near the end, Viola walks away from Corbin, far away. Then she jumps up and—don't ask me how—flies *backward* toward him, covering about half the stage in midair. He catches her. (The audience gasped. This moment of serious danger is probably what first made people think of the World Trade Center.) Soon afterward, two more couples come in and finish the dance, quietly, alongside Corbin and Viola. So, out of the private place in which the duet transpired, we are led back into the world.

Throughout his career, Taylor has been attached to ambivalence, to the pairing of opposites, and this habit of mind doesn't always serve him well. Sometimes it makes him seem cagey. The other new piece of the City Center season, "Dream Girls," set to barbershop quartets, consisted mostly of dances in which four hapless cowpokes were chased around the stage by women outfitted with enormous, bobbing breasts and bellies and bottoms. Some spectators, I'm told, were offended by this, but horror of sex is an old story in Taylor, and people who can't get used to it should stay home. The dances were well made and often hilarious. Characteristically, though, Taylor concluded this dirty fun by switching gears and having the dancers pair off tenderly (one woman dropped to her knees and prayed), to the sacramental song "Now the Day Is Over." This wasn't a joke; it was done straight. Such evasion is the downside of Taylor's

double-mindedness. Its upside, which we saw in "Promethean Fire," is an ambiguity that is not only rich theatrically—it gives shading, texture—but actually looks like truth.

A week after the Taylor company closed at City Center, the Mark Morris Dance Group opened at the Brooklyn Academy of Music. I think Morris's two programs gave too much play to his deadpan humor and not enough space to his earnest, great-themes pieces. Still, even when he's having fun, he's serious, as in "Serenade," the new solo he made for himself to a guitar-and-percussion score by his longtime collaborator Lou Harrison, who died in February. Like a lot of Morris solos, it is aggressively simple. He comes out and does five little dances, one with a box, one with a copper pipe, one with a fan, one with finger cymbals, and one with castanets, in that order. "This is all it is!" he seems to be saying. (And he said much the same in his article in the *Times* on March 23rd about how he made the dance.) But all it is turns out to be a considerable amount. Under the prodding of interviewers, Morris has said that when he was a child he spent a lot of time in front of the bedroom mirror, wrapped in bedsheets, doing the Trojan War or Carmen Miranda or whatever. In a sense, he is still doing that—showing us how a copper pipe, carried in a certain way, can be a sceptre, a torch, Excalibur. But the main transformative act in his work is the meeting of private feeling, as represented by the flesh, with overt pattern, the music. In "Serenade," because it is a solo, one sees the encounter as if through a microscope.

This makes it a good introduction to the most ambitious new work that Morris presented this season: "Kolam," for ten dancers, to a complicated score by Ethan Iverson, an American jazz composer, and Zakir Hussain, an Indian drum virtuoso. "Kolam" is the Tamil word for the ornate colored-powder drawings with which Indians adorn the walls of their houses and temples—"They're blessings," Morris says, "visual prayers"—and this dance is more decorative, visually, than anything else Morris has ever made. It has circles and crosses and cascades, twirling and handstands and splits. It has Indianesque costumes

(by Katherine McDowell), plus ankle bells. Unlike most of Morris's work, it even has a set: a backdrop of heroically scaled red and yellow smears by the English painter Howard Hodgkin. But in all this fanciness it never forgets its mother, the body. In the most exalted section, a slow movement with heavy drumming, two women are carried in vertically, pacing in the air like winged horses. Morris could have made this look easy, but he didn't. Flanking each woman are two guys sweating to hold her up by her armpits. We feel her armpits—the clamp, the strain—at the same time that, with the idea, we soar.

That kind of double logic has been present on Morris's stage from the beginning. This season, he revived a 1982 work, "New Love Song Waltzes" (to Brahms's song cycle of the same name), that is about all romantic love and, in the process, about the body's hidden parts. As the dancers storm around at Brahms's bidding, the women's dresses fly up again and again. The whole piece seems to be performed by bare thighs—not a bad idea for an essay on passion. "New Love Song Waltzes" was a product of the free-love spirit of the sixties and seventies, but the audience at BAM in 2003 still adored it. Morris is too mature now to get a charge out of lifting someone's dress, but among the movement motifs in "Kolam" there is a phrase in which the dancer, sitting with his back to us, raises his rear in the air, describes an arc with it, and then lowers it again. A lovely design, you think. At the same time, you think, That man is waving his butt at us. Only gradually do you reconcile the two things in your mind.

It has always been something of a mystery how Morris, who is a very sophisticated artist, and largely an abstractionist, became such a favorite with the public. One reason is that he's often funny. Another is that he's clear. The arc-of-the-buttocks motif, passed back and forth among the dancers, is repeated many, many times, as are other motifs in the dance. Morris is going to make you understand what he's up to or die trying. But the main reason for his popularity, I think, is his constant yoking of the humblest facts of life—the sweat, the buttocks—with the ideal. On his stage people see their secrets told, and joined to beauty, and they are grateful. ♦

LOST IN LANGUAGE

Two British masters and their talking cures.

BY JOHN LAHR

The British playwright Peter Nichols likes, he says, to keep audiences in a state of "comic alarm." In the Roundabout's revival of his 1967 semi-autobiographical play, "A Day in the Death of Joe Egg" (at the American Airlines Theatre), Nichols's unreliable narrator, Bri—a droll, bored schoolteacher, brought to magnificent life by the comedian Eddie Izzard—inspires that alarm, first in the audience, which he treats as his rowdy classroom, then in his sweet-natured wife, Sheila (the expert Victoria Hamilton), whom he chases around the sofa in vain pursuit of a little rumpy-pumpy. Bri's jollity may have a manic, almost slapstick edge—he greets Sheila with a plastic spider on his cheek—but when the doorbell rings and the couple's brain-damaged ten-year-old daughter enters, or, rather, is wheeled in, the smile is wiped off the audience's face. The caprice of the characters gives way to the caprice of the gods, and we find ourselves in the no man's land of human catastrophe. Here before us is Josephine, or Joe (Madeleine Martin), "the living parsnip," as Bri calls her—a beautiful girl with black bangs, almond eyes that roll up under her lids, and a palsied left hand held unnaturally against her shoulder. She is unable to speak, to move, or to acknowledge her parents' presence; her only signs of life are the convulsions into which she sometimes lapses. As Bri and Sheila minister to their child, like ventriloquists with a moaning dummy, they carry on a mordant dialogue that gives the speechless Joe words and gives them detachment from their own doom.

SHEILA: Daddy's pleased you're trying, love. What with your eleven plus on the way.

BRI: You want to go to a decent school.

SHEILA: I don't want to be shunted into some secondary modern slum, she says—

BRI: Like the one where Daddy works—

SHEILA: Share a room with forty or fifty council-house types and blackies.

BRI: No, I've had enough of them, she says, at the Spastics' Nursery. You want to go on to the Training Centre, help to make those ballpoint pens.

With his seductively astringent lines, Nichols dares the audience to face the unspeakable. The grief these parents suffer from cannot be translated into words, and, as the play demonstrates, those who endure such grief find our society's shibboleths about the "gift of life" almost comically inadequate. Tragedy isolates them from society, from each other, and, Bri feels, from God. "I see Him as a sort of manic-depressive rugby-footballer," Bri says. "He looked down and thought to Himself, 'I'll fix that bastard!' And He did!" Sheila takes refuge in amateur theatricals; Bri has his hobby—painting sub-Richard Hamilton Pop-art canvases—and his jokes. Life, for both of them, is negotiable, but not quite redeemable, and we watch as they struggle to make wiggle room around their despair.

Sheila finds hope; Bri is beyond hope. "Every cloud has a jet-black lining," he says. Sheila can't understand that her husband's comic carrying on and jealous outbursts are also his only antidotes to depression. "At least I don't just sit about coining epigrams—wallowing in self-pity!" she tells him. "At least I *do* something about it." Their living room—with its plants, its aquarium, and its birdcage—bears witness to Sheila's capacity for nurturing, to what her husband rather sourly calls her ability to "embrace all living things." But, unfortunately for Bri, Joe's tragedy has dropped him down a notch in the family's emotional pecking order. "I get my hug somewhere between the budgerigar and the stick insect. Which is the reason for all this smutty talk," he confides to the audience. "Calling attention to myself to make sure I get more than my share."

Izzard's disarming lightness of touch and swiftness of mind make him just the right messenger for Nichols's sulfurous irony. He walks with a sort of sailor's roll, which both broadcasts assurance and mocks it. In his standup rou-

tine, Izzard reveals his vulnerabilities—and his penchant for cross-dressing—as a way of putting himself beyond humiliation and shame. Bri's impulses are not so different. When, in the second act, he enters wearing his most recent paintings—of Wild Bill Hickok—like sandwich boards and toting cap pistols, which he fires John Wayne style at the couple's friends Freddie (Michael Gaston) and Pam (Margaret Colin), he is giddy with resignation. "Pow-pow!" he says, pulling the trigger. But nothing quite lives up to his expectations—not even the toy guns, which refuse to go off until he clownishly slaps them into action.

Murder is the subtext of "Joe Egg," and not just the play murder of those epitomes of smug normality Freddie and Pam. Nichols manipulates the audience into believing at various points that Bri has smothered, overdosed, and finally frozen his daughter to death. "Did you feel relieved at all, even a bit, when you thought I'd done it?" Bri asks Sheila. And, all denials to the contrary, the fact is that we do. But the greatest shock—the one that Nichols saves for the last beat of the play—is a shock not of death but of life. As Sheila bustles about feeding the fish and talking to the birds, Bri, instead of saving his daughter, saves himself. Nichols leaves the audience with no promise of comfort or of rebirth, no heroic sense of his own goodness—nothing at all from the bargain basement of boulevard theatre. Remorseless, clear-eyed, and bitter, he asks not for pity but for understanding.

The white heat of Nichols's satire is not typical of the British pessimism so succinctly defined in song by Noël Coward: "With a scowl and a frown / we'll keep our peckers down." The chilly essence of the British bittersweet—that stale whiff of absence and abdication—is the realm of the actor and playwright Alan Bennett, who, as a member of Britain's theatrical royalty, is a sort of duke of disappointment. (He notes in his diary that at the age of ten he had "a fully developed capacity not quite to enjoy myself, a capacity I have retained ever since.")

In more than forty years of fine writing, Bennett has staked out his claim to the sardonic sad-sack kingdom of

British lower-middle-class timidity. In "Talking Heads" (at the Minetta Lane), six exquisite cameos translated from television to the stage and divided between two shows, his skills as a miniaturist are on display. Bennett misses nothing. Each monologue conjures up a desiccated universe with scrupulously

ters," a tale whose trajectory follows this busybody from her *escritoire* to a prison cell, where she finally finds the connection—with fellow-inmates—for which her obsessive letter-writing substituted. Bennett specializes in this kind of epiphanette—the sigh of recognition. In "The Hand of God," Celia (Brenda

in London's Camden Town, keeping a wary watch on life. He knows about solitude, and so do his characters, most of whom spend some of their time snatching furtive glimpses of people from behind their curtains and projecting their own puritanical fantasies onto them. "I see we've got a new couple moved in opposite," Miss Ruddock says. "Don't look very promising. The kiddy looks filthy." Bennett's theatrical career began in the sixties, with the groundbreaking revue "Beyond the Fringe," and although he writes characters, not jokes, he still gets off his share of hilarious lines. In "Her Big Chance," the vacant wanna-be actress Lesley (well-played by Valerie Mahaffey), a vulgarian who aspires to sophistication, recounts a day's shoot, making her porno movie sound like an art film. She gushes at the civility of an assistant called Terry, and repeats her riposte to his bon mot "Why is making a film like being a mushroom?": "I said, 'Why, Terry?' He said, 'They keep you in the dark and every now and again somebody comes and throws a bucket of shit over you.' I said, 'That's interesting, only, Terry, they don't grow mushrooms like that now. It's all industrialized.'" In "Bed Among the Lentils," a vignette about an alcoholic vicar's wife (the excellent Kathleen Chalfant) who has an affair with an Indian shopkeeper, the heroine lives at a distance from both her husband and her faith. "To look at me, the hair, the flat chest, the wan smile, you'd think I was just cut out for God," she says.

The swagger of highfalutin English is a source of constant amusement to Bennett. Not all the actors in this production of "Talking Heads," directed by Michael Engler, can get their tongues around his Northern vowels, but Lynn Redgrave is a ringer in the show's most memorable monologue, "Miss Fozzard Finds Her Feet." With a fluting daftness worthy of Ronald Firbank, she regales us with the story of a woman's unusual liaison with her chiropodist. ("Next time, if you're very good, I shall initiate you into the mysteries of the metatarsal arch," he tells her at the end of their first session.) Like all Bennett's characters, Miss Fozzard can't hear herself, but we can. "I may not be a feminist," she says, with mock-heroic élan, "though I did spearhead the provision of potpourri in the ladies toilets." ♦



Peter Nichols's narrator is brought to magnificent life by the comedian Eddie Izzard.

observed detail; through the ambush of refined grammar, Bennett winks out the longing and the lunacy behind his characters' propriety. "I can't say the service was up to scratch. It smacked of the conveyor-belt. In fact I wrote to the crematorium," Miss Ruddock (Christine Ebersole) begins in "A Lady of Let-

Wehle), an antique dealer who knows the price of everything and the value of nothing, ends up selling for a hundred pounds a drawing that turns out to be a multimillion-dollar Michelangelo sketch for the Sistine Chapel.

Bennett peers out at the world from behind the venetian blinds of his house

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THE CURRENT CINEMA

MONSTRES SACRÉS

"Cet Amour-Là" and "Fellini: I'm a Born Liar."

BY DAVID DENBY

In "Cet Amour-Là," we first see him on the beach: a tall, slender, mild-looking young man in a white suit, with a pursy little mouth and the dead eyes of a depressive. He calls her up and goes to her apartment. She lets him in. Then she changes her mind; she is brisk and insulting, glaring at him in indignation. Finally, she allows him to stay, but strictly on her terms: he will listen to her words; he will type her manuscripts; he will let her drink. And so the scandalous affair begins. In 1980, at the age of sixty-six, during a fallow period of her working life, the novelist, screenwriter, playwright, and director Marguerite Duras took as a lover a twenty-eight-year-old admirer, Yann Andréa, who had begun writing letters to her five years earlier, when he was a philosophy student. (In the movie, the lovers are played by Jeanne Moreau and Aymeric Demarigny.) Andréa lived with Duras—in her apartment on the Normandy coast and in Paris and other places—for sixteen years, until she died, at the age of eighty-one; he became her secretary and, in the end, her nurse. The movie is derived from a blow-by-blow novel he wrote about the affair after her death.

When lovers are separated by decades, the older partner is usually a man, and most of the world sees mutual exploitation in the connection—an exchange of money or power for beauty. But artists make their own rules. Most famously, the aged, barrel-chested Picasso, painting dishes and cavorting in his skivvies in his South of France villa, had his young beauties. But female artists have chosen young lovers, too—Colette, of course, and George Eliot, who married a young man, a certain

John Cross, soon after the death of her long-term inamorata and intellectual companion, the writer George Henry Lewes. Drawing from youth, the older artist keeps going—a case of exploitation, maybe, but exploitation in the service of something greater than simple narcissism.

The movie that Josée Dayan has made about the Duras-Andréa affair is not a scandal. Unfortunately, it's not much of anything but a solemn joke. Dayan has made many documentaries for French television, but she has little feeling for the dramatic pacing of a scene. The beginning is promising: Duras's touch of nervousness and anger feels right. Does she really want this languid pale boy at her feet? "A big zero," she calls him (he doesn't disagree), and later she asserts, "I'm much smarter than you. I'm very talented—that's a fact." But Andréa is useful. He adores her, he's an audience, and quickly the movie collapses into an endless recitation. Duras dictates her articles and books to him; they take walks on the beach, and she comments on the sights. At every moment, she exercises the French art of making arbitrary declarations. "Bathtubs scare me," she says. She also announces, "To look at the sea day and night is unbearable." But she might just as well have said, "Rattan furniture scares me" and "Not to look at the sea day and night is unbearable." The only point of such remarks is that she exhibits the will to make them. As Dayan imagines her, Duras is a dazzling intellectual star in the French diva-oracle tradition, and her continuous self-assertion is a miracle. But in the movie Duras comes off as a sibyl without a vision.

Andréa has a few moments of re-

The New Yorker (ISSN 0028-792X), published weekly (except for six combined issues: Feb. 17 & 24, Apr. 21 & 28, June 16 & 23, July 14 & 21, Aug. 18 & 25, Dec. 22 & 29) by The Condé Nast Publications Inc. (4 Times Square, N.Y., N.Y. 10036-6592), which is a division of Advance Magazine Publishers, Inc. Vol. LXXIX, No. 8, April 14, 2003. Periodical postage paid at New York, N.Y., and at additional mailing offices. Authorized as second-class mail by the Post Office Department, Ottawa, Canada, and for payment of postage in cash. Publications Mail Agreement No. 40644503. Canadian goods-and-services-tax registration number R123242885. Registered as a newspaper at the British Post Office.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The New Yorker, P.O. Box 37684, Boone, IA 50037-0684. PRINTED IN U.S.A.

volt, storming out and then wandering back in, but most of the time he is silent, his face cast down, as if he were taking notes at the Sorbonne. Aymeric Demarigny has acted before, but he doesn't yet have the presence of an actor. Although he's young, his face is flaccid, and his eyes never do come to life. Dayan keeps the camera on Moreau, who was seventy-four when the movie was shot and still has strong cheekbones and the familiar pouting sullenness that gives way to sudden warmth. Her voice, always husky, is now just a rasp—the vocal cords seem to have been soaking in brine—but her hands, one under her chin, the other fondling a pen as she dictates, are more expressive than a sculptor's.

Even when she's alone with this youth, Moreau carries herself with a sense of Duras's position in the world. Born in Indochina in 1914, Duras made her way to Paris in the thirties, participated in the Resistance, and joined the Communist Party. She began publishing during the war, and wrote novels and movie screenplays, including the screenplay for Alain Resnais's classic "Hiroshima, Mon Amour" (1959). Eventually, she began directing, and made a series of movies that play enigmatically with time and memory and issues of representation. One of her films, "Le Camion" (1977), featured long stretches of her reading a script on camera to Gérard Depardieu, who sat in a posture of worshipful silence similar to the one Andréa assumes. Shrewd as well as dominating, Duras developed the lucrative habit of adapting a piece of her own material from one medium to another. This talent for self-promotion comes through: "Cet Amour-Là" is at its most candid and entertaining when the gimlet-eyed old woman schemes to fight her way back to the top. Duras wrote some of her best work during her years with Andréa, including the mood-memory fictional reminiscence of Indochina, "The Lover" (1984), which became an international success. We're willing to give Andréa's presence the benefit of the doubt, though for a long time it isn't clear to us what in the world he is doing to revive her powers. He's not an intellectual companion. When he's naked, Duras doesn't look at him with desire. At the end, when she is ill

and frequently delusional, he takes good care of her, and that suggests a remarkable patience. But is this material for a movie that presents itself as a great romance? Duras was often cruel to her lover, and the film reinforces the cruelty by turning Andréa into a nothing. As far as we can tell, what he did for her, and what she took from him, makes sense only in the most psychologically unattractive terms—he turned himself into a slave and her into a master so that she could write again.

Common sense suggests that if you're going to make a movie about sado-masochism you had better make it funny or dirty. But this movie is watery and sentimental, as well as cruel, and it shares the most flagrant weaknesses of upper-

the scene is remarkable, but it makes you laugh, too, because in so much of the surrounding interview material the director describes himself as a kind of medium through which a given movie passes, a mere craftsman in the service of ineffable visions. His actual practice, as we see from the many scenes of him at work, is consciously to mold every breath of air in the movie, to dominate, terrify, seduce, and to dream and suffer for everyone. And some of Fellini's collaborators confirm his mania. This Franco-Italian-Scottish co-production, directed by Damian Pettigrew, is an extraordinarily controlled piece of film in its own right. The interviews, recorded in the year before the director's death, are often eloquent—Fellini's long



Jeanne Moreau as Marguerite Duras and Aymeric Demarigny as her young lover.

middlebrow French cinema, substituting literacy for drama, the form of a remark for the substance of a remark, "La Vie en Rose" for music, the idea of passion for the reality of passion. "Cet Amour-Là" openly consecrates a bully, a woman with an intellectual vanity so thick that not even Achilles' spear could have pierced it. The picture might have been called "Miroir, Mon Amour."

In the superb documentary fantasia "Fellini: I'm a Born Liar" (playing at Film Forum through April 15th), Federico Fellini directs an erotic scene from "Fellini Satyricon" (1969), shaping the performances of three beautiful young actors with his hands, caressing the air as he croons instructions to first one and then another. His control of

sentences actually take you somewhere—and Pettigrew and his colleagues provide a surrounding texture of film excerpts and freshly shot footage that has the density of one of the maestro's own movies, without the excess. Pettigrew uses a gliding camera to capture the actual look of Fellini's home town, the bedraggled seaport of Rimini, and other locations that the director recast as reverie; the movie has periods of mystery and quiet and, throughout, an over-all atmosphere of uncanny poignance. The most delicious episode: Terence Stamp re-creating Fellini's accent and manner as the director gives him profane instructions for a scene in the 1968 short film "Toby Dammit." Stamp's outrageous bit of mimicry may be his greatest achievement as an actor. ♦

THE EIGHTH HUNDRED DAYS: THE QUIZ

1. True or false: When critics of George W. Bush's tax cuts pointed out that the wealthiest one per cent of taxpayers would divvy up twenty-eight per cent of the windfall, while the poorest sixty per cent would split eight per cent of the benefits, Bush accused them of engaging in "class warfare."

2. Who is John Brady Kiesling?

(a) The Christian conservative who withdrew his nomination to Bush's Advisory Council on H.I.V. and AIDS after it became known that he referred to AIDS as "the gay plague."

(b) The commentator who said, referring to Bush's plan to eliminate taxes on stock dividends, "This isn't even trickle-down economics. It's mist-down economics."

(c) The State Department diplomat whose resignation letter said, "Until this Administration it had been possible to believe that by upholding the policies of my president I was also upholding the interests of the American people and the world. I believe it no longer."

(d) The White House aide, known for his calm disposition, about whom Karl Rove said, "I'd use the word 'sweet' if it didn't make me look odd."

3. Three of these statements were uttered by George W. Bush. Which was spoken by Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld?

(a) "The war on terror involves Saddam Hussein because of the nature of Saddam Hussein, the history of Saddam Hussein, and his willingness to terrorize himself."

(b) "For those who urge more diplomacy, I would simply say that diplomacy hasn't worked."

(c) "There are known knowns. These are things we know that we know. There are known unknowns. That is to say, there are things that we know we don't

know. But there are also unknown unknowns. There are things we don't know we don't know."

(d) "Republicans and Democrats stood with me in the Rose Garden to announce their support of a clear statement of purpose [to Saddam]: You disarm or we will."

Match the observation about Bush with the columnist who made it.

4. "There is some kind of anger in the man, a hostility that sometimes seems barely under control—as if he were, in street parlance, being 'dissed.'"

5. "He has the unreflective person's immunity from irony, that great killer of intellectual passion. Ask him to reconcile his line on Iraq with his line on North Korea and he just gets irritated."

6. "Mr. Bush's greatest weakness is that too many people, at home and abroad, smell that he's not really interested in repairing the world."

7. "A steady hand on the helm in high seas, a knowledge of where we must go and why, a resolve to achieve safe harbor. More and more this presidency is feeling like a gift."

8. "This is the worst president ever. He is the worst president in all of American history."

(a) Peggy Noonan.

(b) Helen Thomas.

(c) Richard Reeves.

(d) Thomas L. Friedman.

(e) Michael Kinsley.

9. Who commented on Bush's "almost giddy readiness to kill"?

(a) Senator Chuck Hagel (R-Nebraska).

(b) MSNBC's Chris Matthews.

(c) CBS's Dan Rather.

(d) General Tommy Franks.

10. Which headline did *not* appear in a daily or weekly U.S. newspaper?

(a) "ADMINISTRATION ESTABLISHES NEW WETLANDS GUIDELINES; 20 MILLION ACRES COULD LOSE PROTECTED STATUS, GROUPS SAY"

(b) "ASHCROFT ORDERS U.S. ATTORNEYS TO SEEK DEATH IN MORE CASES"

(c) "BUSH SEEKS STIFFER PROOF FOR POOR TO OBTAIN AID"

(d) "BUSH PLANS TO LET RELIGIOUS GROUPS GET BUILDING AID; WORSHIP SITES INVOLVED"

(e) "BUSH ORDERS A 3-YEAR DELAY IN OPENING SECRET DOCUMENTS"

(f) "BUSH PUSHES PLAN TO CURB APPEALS IN MEDICARE CASES; BENEFIT DENIALS AT ISSUE"

(g) "BUSH DECLARES WAR, WARNS NATION MANY SACRIFICES WILL BE NECESSARY"

(h) "PENTAGON SEEKING TO DEPLOY MISSILES BEFORE FULL TESTING"

(i) "EPA TO ALLOW POLLUTERS TO BUY CLEAN WATER CREDITS"

11. What did George W. Bush do immediately before announcing the commencement of the war against Iraq?

(a) He winked at Laura and blew her a kiss.

(b) He shook his fist and declared, "I feel good."

(c) He called the Prime Minister of Turkey and said, "I loathe you."

(d) He said, "Let's go kick some Iraqi butt."

12. True or false: The orange alert of mid-February was downgraded to yellow after the increased Arab chatter picked up by U.S. intelligence was translated and turned out to be mainly about Michael Jackson.

(12) False.

(9) b, (10) b, (11) b, (12) True, (1) c, (2) c, (3) c, (4) c, (5) e,

Answers:



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has ever
owned a house,
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